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March 2004

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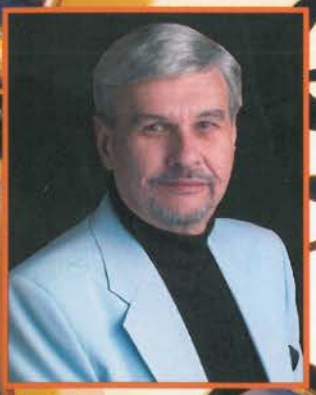

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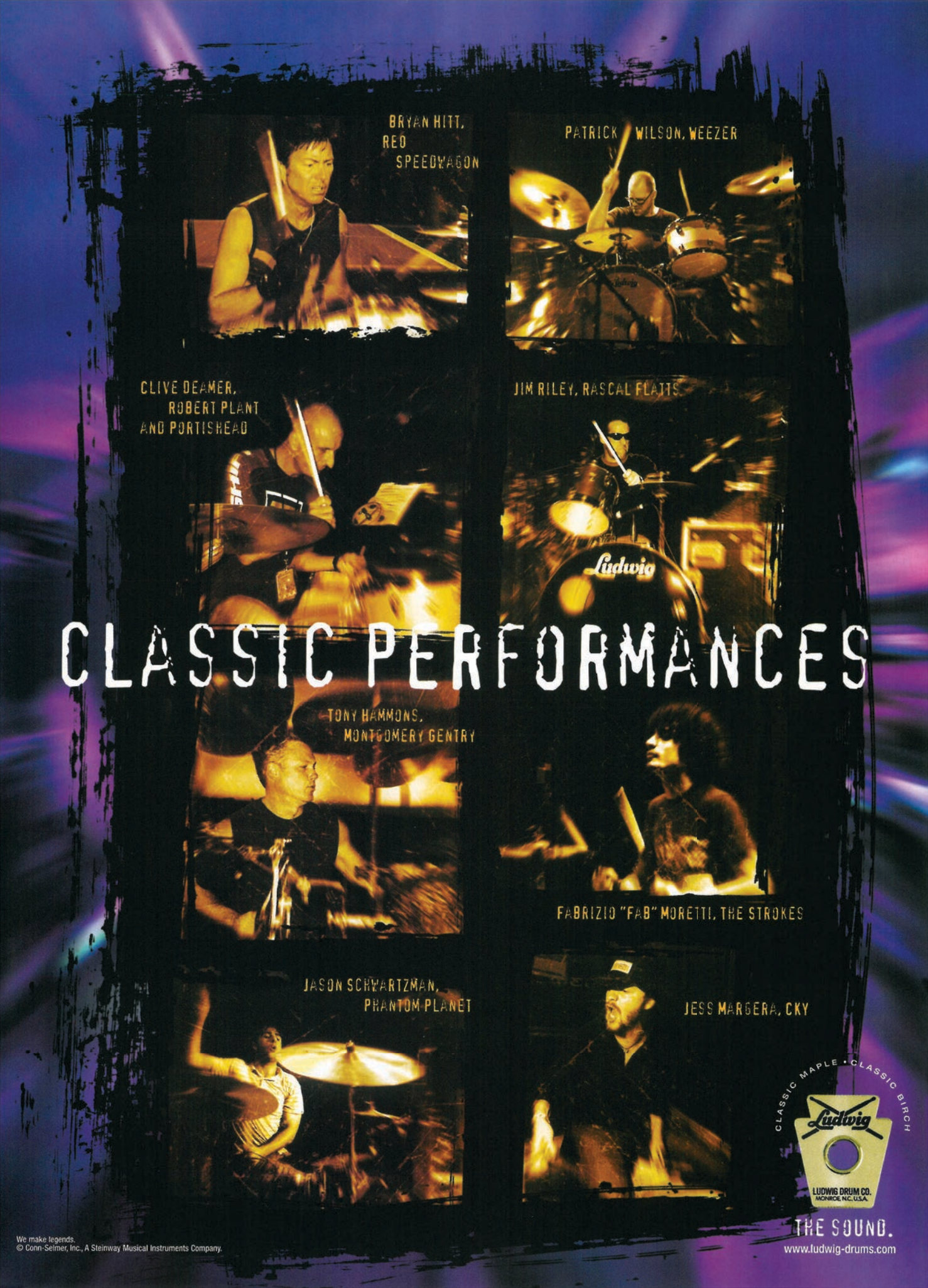
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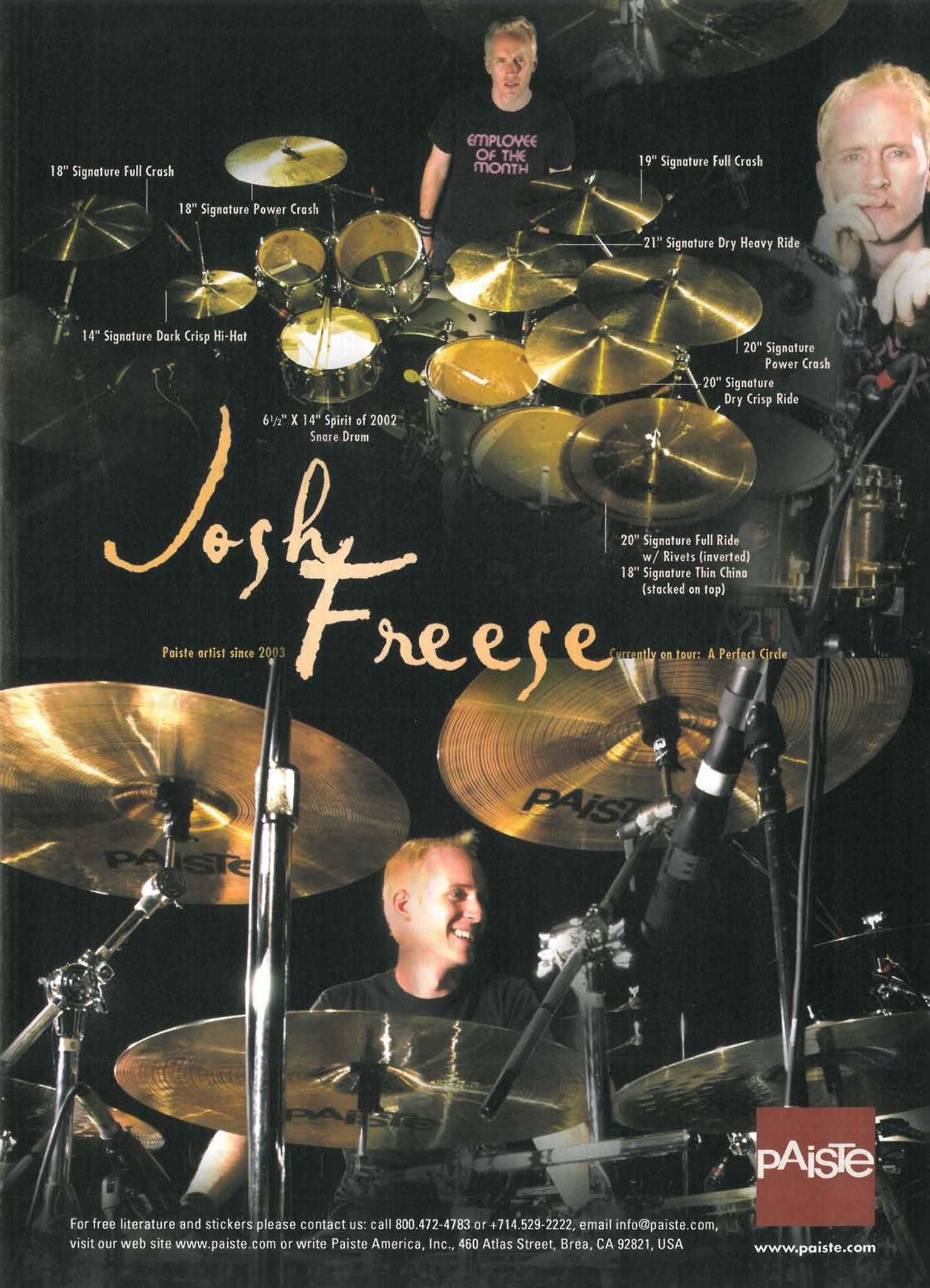
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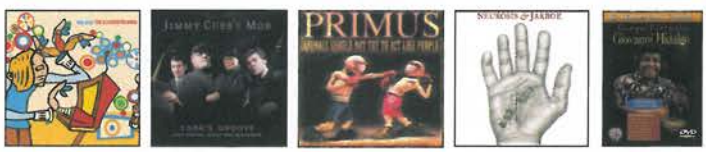

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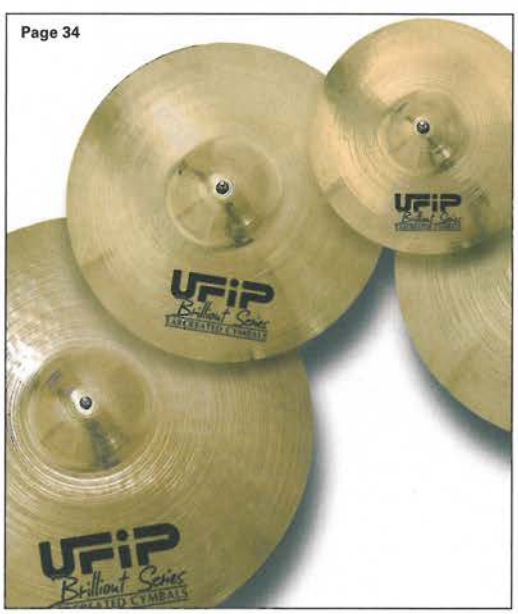

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"What's nice about my Starclassic Maple Kit is I get the vintage look and feel, but I get TAMA's sound– the perfect combination of old meets new."

the ALL-AMERIC

We caught up with Chris Gaylor in Tacoma, Washington right after the band's tour of Japan. "Japan was awesome!" enthused the All-American Rejects drummer, "and the food is amazing. Right now we're going to do some radio dates. Then finally back home." Where's home? "Oklahoma! (Gaylor quickly quotes the lyrics to Rogers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma*) 'where the wind comes sweeping down the plain.' We're the only state with our own musical– how cool is that!"

Oklahoma's strong Midwest marching band tradition is one reason Chris is playing drums today. "I learned to play in marching bands, which was amazingly fun. I played quad toms. That's where a lot of my playing comes from. I started band in 6th grade and took lessons until 8th when I did jazz band stuff and took lessons with an actual kit. My father was a drummer when he was in college, and we'd sit around and listen to Buddy Rich, Philly Joe Jones and Gene Krupa and look at the great pictures of their old vintage drums. I also listened to Dave Grohl a lot. He was kind of the Bonham of my era. As a matter of fact, my other favorite drummers were also playing Tama– Stewart Copeland, Bill Bruford, Kenny Aronoff– and that probably had a lot to do with my decision to go with Tama. The drums always sounded really good and consistent."

"What's nice about my Starclassic Maple kit is I get the vintage look and feel, but I get Tama's sound– the perfect combination of old meets new. It's a standard sized kit, except for the two snare drums. Which snare I play, depends on the room. I don't do anything technical like switch out the snares. I'm pretty much a meat and potatoes type guy. I'm technical when I'm playing by myself, but in a band, I figure it's best to keep it simple– most of the time."

"I can't see myself ever switching from Tama– everyone should own a Tama kit," laughs Chris. "Well, at least one! This is actually the biggest set I've had so far– I've never had a really big kit in my life, but when I sat down behind the kit with the 24" kick drum for our "Time Stands Still" video, it just felt so comfortable. Some day I'd like to have a giant kit to see what it does. Hear what it sounds like. Just a giant kit to play hard."

"The 8 x 14 G-Maple is the wicked awesome snare drum of all snare drums. You get that gigantic hallway feel, but you can still hear ghost notes on it. When I first bought the 8 x 14 brass, and we were playing small rooms, it would drown out my kick drum, it has such crack to it."

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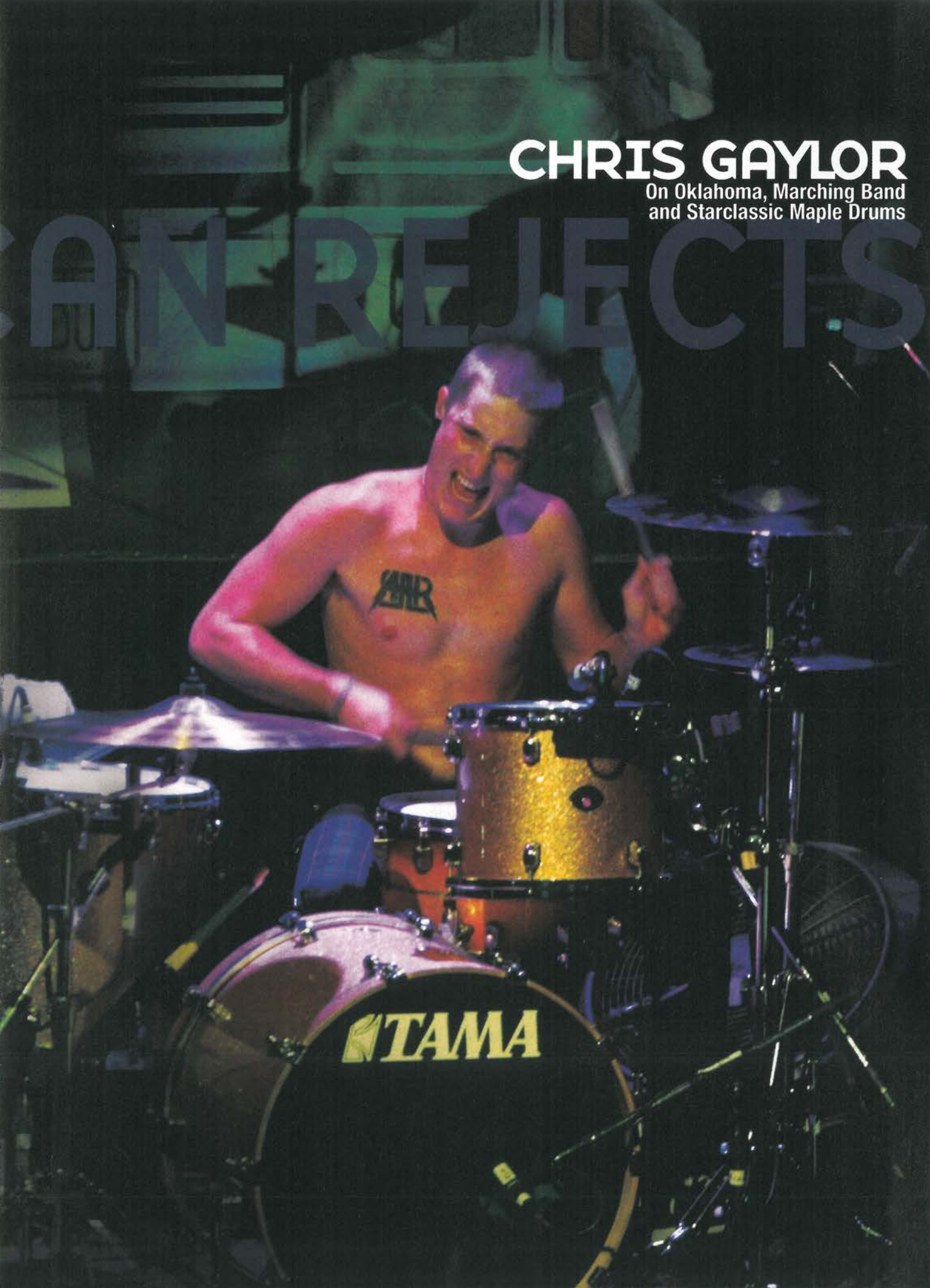
CHRIS GAYLOR
On Oklahoma, Marching Band
and Starclassic Maple Drums
TAMA

In Ron's Memory

Dear Friends Of *Modern Drummer*.

You've all been so kind to us since my husband, *MD* publisher Ron Spagnardi, passed away on September 22, 2003. How do I begin to thank everyone for the hundreds of letters, cards, and emails that we received? Your wonderful comments have provided so much comfort to me, my daughter Lori, and our entire *MD* family. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your kindness.

Ron never really thought of himself as anyone special. He just loved doing what came so naturally to him. This magazine meant the world to him. In fact, our lives revolved around *Modern Drummer*. Years ago, when Ron and I first started dating—and *MD* wasn't even a thought in his mind yet—he would often wonder where his drumming ability would lead him. Now we know.

I don't believe Ron ever realized how many people he touched in the span of *MD*'s twenty-seven years. He was a modest man. (Right now I'm sure he's wondering what all this fuss is about.) Many will remember Ron and me coming out on stage during the *MD* Festivals at Montclair State University to greet everyone. The reason I always joined him on stage was because he was never one for drawing attention to himself.

That said, we would like to focus some attention on Ron with the tribute feature included in this issue. To further honor his memory, we've established a scholarship fund in his name at his alma mater, Berklee College Of Music. If you'd like to make a donation to the fund, or if you're a student interested in applying for the scholarship, please see the information on page 76 of this issue.

In closing, rest assured that we will keep Ron's dream alive in all future issues of *Modern Drummer*.

Isabel Spagnardi

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 28, Number 3

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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MODERN DRUMMER magazine (**ISSN** 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2004 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: MODERN DRUMMER Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: (973) 239-4140. Fax: (973) 239-7139. Email: mdinfo@moderndrummer.com.

MODERN DRUMMER welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: US, Canada, and Mexico $34.97 per year; $56.97, two years. Other international $41.97 per year, $79.97, two years. Single copies $4.99.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0480. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Call (800) 551-3786 or (815) 734-1170.

MUSIC DEALERS: Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer Retail Vision, 2 Maple Street, Suite 6, Middlebury, VT 05753, (800) 381-1288.

REPRINTS: For reprints contact Heather Osborne at PARS International Corp., tel: (212) 221-9595, ext. 333, fax: (212) 221-1468, heather@parsintl.com, www.magreprints.com.

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE: Robert Abramson & Associates, Inc. Libby Abramson, President, PO Box 740346, Boyton Beach, FL 33474-0346, abramson@prodigy.net.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

MEMBER: Magazine Publishers Of America, National Association Of Music Merchants, American Music Conference, Percussive Arts Society, Music Educators National Conference, Percussion Marketing Council, Music Magazine Publishers Association

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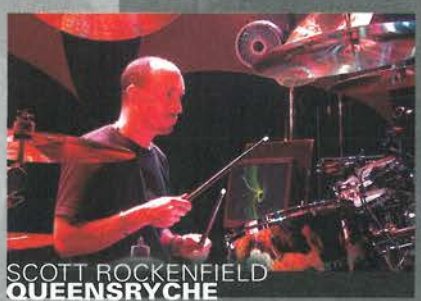

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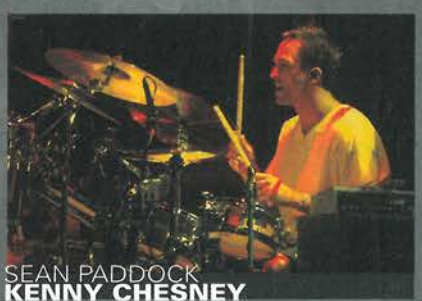

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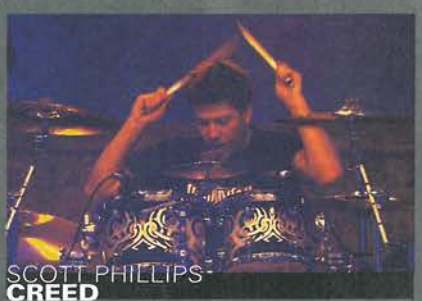

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Ron Spagnardi

"We have lost an amazing man fire, unquestionably changed

Editor's Note: The outpouring of sentiment from Modern Drummer *contributors and readers regarding the passing of Ron Spagnardi was literally overwhelming. Along with Ron's family, all of us at* MD *were deeply touched by these expressions of appreciation and esteem for Ron and his achievements.*

Space does not allow us to publish all of the messages we received. We're presenting the following representative examples in token of our appreciation for such heartfelt support.

For many years, *MD* has recognized and memorialized losses among the drumming community. However, none have hit as hard as the loss of Ron Spagnardi. Ron may not have been one of the top-rated players in the industry, but he brought something greater than chops, timing, and rhythm. He established a line of communication within our community that bonds us all. That line was able to encompass all aspects of drumming, from reading to ragtime, and from solos to screamo, making each one of us a better-educated and enriched drummer.

Ron's vision wove the fabric that helps to strengthen our community. These are the qualities of a father who holds a family together. He will be missed.

Stuart Wertlieb
via Internet

What Ron created was something no "great drummer" alone would have been able to do. In fact, he succeeded in changing the lives of drummers all over the world without playing a note! When I play a gig I always think of drummers past and present, famous and not famous who have influenced me. Ron will always be one of those people.

David Drubin
Miami, FL

Aside from all that Ron gave to drummers, he also was the first major publisher to print my work. Back in the "hard copy" days, he always made sure to add a hand-written note to the acceptance letters, just saying "hi" and encouraging me to keep writing. Every drummer in the world owes Ron a great debt. Now it's up to all of us to be "keepers of the flame."

Ron Hefner (MD writer)
Ft. Myers, FL

With his magazine, Ron created a connection—a way for fans and basement drummers to get to know famous drummers, to gain information on products, to take lessons, and to feel the pulse and energy of being a drummer. And with the *MD* Festivals, Ron brought the drumming world together like nothing else had ever done before. The Festivals were never a competition, but a place for sharing ideas and approaches to the thing we love. Ron even surprised us by performing at the 1997 show, where he proved that he could swing with the best.

I first met Ron and Isabel at one of the early Festivals. Ron was a kind and gentle man who seemed to enjoy the Festivals as much as the drummers who attended did. Year after year, he and Isabel would greet me warmly, making me feel like I was one of the gang. I will miss him deeply.

Rodney Harrison
Jamaica, NY

Under Ron's guidance and vision, *MD* became the percussion publication "of record," and, indeed, the most respected. I am always honored when I'm asked to contribute something. Like Gene, Papa Jo, Max, and Buddy, Ron helped change the world of drumming. He will be missed.

Bruce H. Klauber, D., Music (MD contributor)
Lafayette Hill, PA

I never met or knew Ron, but the vision that he pursued and eventually realized twenty-seven years ago has had—and continues to have—an immeasurable effect on musicians everywhere, and on drummers and percussionists in particular. My sincerest condolences go to his family and his extended family at *Modern Drummer.*

Geoff Lang
Montreal, QC, Canada

I hope Ron knew how much we love the day our *MD* arrives in the mail, and the joy we get from reading it. What a wonderful idea he had, and what an impact his life had on all who love drumming.

Bill Bunkers
Oak Park, IL

The drumming community has lost a pioneering spirit who gave us a voice when there was nothing there for us. Ron brought us all together, spearheading the *MD* Festival, and putting drum journalism on the map. Even though I never met him, I always felt that I knew him through his magazine and his books. He was—and I'm proud to say this—my drum father.

Ron, thank you for creating this wonderful magazine, which will forever stand as the legacy of a great man. You will be dearly missed by a community that you helped create.

Stuart McConaghy
via Internet

who, through his own will and creative the world of drumming forever."

Back in the mid-1970s, when *MD* was nothing more than a good idea, I recall Ron running ads in the *Aquarian* newspaper looking for writers for "a new drum magazine." None of us knew at that time how successful *MD* would become. I can think of very few individuals who have done more to promote, educate, and entertain drummers of all levels than Ron Spagnardi has. He will be sorely missed by the entire drumming community.

Bob Cianci (MD writer)
Highland Lakes, NJ

From the first *MD* issue I ever read back in 1985, the magazine has helped to inspire, motivate, and improve my playing. None of this would have been possible if Mr. Spagnardi had not had the vision and passion to create *Modern Drummer*, which has led to the global community of like-minded people that we enjoy today. The positive effect of his work on our instrument and on music in general is almost immeasurable.

Dan Hill
from England, via Internet

Ron was always an influential person to me, with the way he thought, wrote, and played. As a fan and devoted reader, I hope the *Modern Drummer* legacy will carry on brightly after this tragedy. Hopefully every drummer will keep in his or her heart what Ron tried to pass on to us during his lifetime. He was a very special person who touched many souls, including mine.

Alex Bettencourt
from Portugal, via Internet

Ron took a chance in 1977 and created the first (and best) magazine for drummers. Who'd have thought that there'd be a market for such a magazine? Ron did! His vision—along with the amazing staff that he assembled—continues to improve, inform, and inspire drummers from all walks of life, levels of skill, and styles of play. I, for one, need to say the obvious: Thank you, Ron.

Jeff Ball
via Internet

What Ron Spagnardi did for the drumming community was second to none. Through his great publication, Ron was able to inspire young and old players alike with interesting interviews, developmental exercises, song charts, and much more. As if that weren't enough, Ron then created the world's most prestigious drumming event. I'm certain that my ten years as an *MD* Festival audience member have helped me to become a better drummer. I also developed strong friendships with many drummers from around the globe. This was Ron's doing! Add to that the fact that Ron and his wife Isabel always made a point to spend quality time with us out in the line. I don't know if they ever realized what that meant to all of us.

Ron was much more than just the head of the world's greatest drumming publication. He was truly respected and fondly loved by drummers from around the globe. It makes me smile to think that, as I write this, Ron is probably trading licks with Buddy and Gene.

Scott Lewis
(MD Festival 3:30 Club)
Manasquan, NJ

Cliché as it may sound, Ron was truly a visionary. I can't express the joy I still feel to this day at getting my *Modern Drummer* in the mail each month, or what that seemingly insignificant event has meant to my life. I never had the chance to meet Mr. Spagnardi and to tell him that I loved his work. But I did, very much. Thank you for letting me offer my respect and gratitude to a man who made me very happy for over a quarter century.

Patrick Berkery
Elk Grove, CA

Ron built bridges that connected continents, and in so doing he helped us to share our cultural diversity. What started as a cottage industry grew to be a global forum and a level playing field for us all. All because Ron Spagnardi dared to dream.

The lessons that I absorbed from *Modern Drummer*'s monthly tutorial are immeasurably responsible for my even being a drummer today. I'm sure that I speak for all writers who have had our work published in *MD* when I say that it's been an honor to contribute to Mr. Spagnardi's dream. Well done, Ron. And thank you.

Rod Fogarty (MD writer)
Toronto, ON, Canada

I feel like I've lost a teacher whose influence I hadn't appreciated until I had occasion to reflect on how much I've learned. Through *MD*, Ron has endowed many drummers who never met him with a profound and lasting gift. For this, he will always be remembered with the deepest respect and appreciation.

Alan Dunst
via Internet

Ron Spagnardi's dedication and enthusiasm transcended *Modern Drummer*. He realized that the magazine was more than ink on paper, more than lessons and rudiments. It is heart, soul, and passion for music and drumming. It represents the camaraderie and brotherhood that make this community what it is. We have lost an amazing man, who, through his own will and creative fire, unquestionably changed the world of drumming forever.

Jodi J. Nepveu
New Hampshire

Morgan Rose

Thanks for the great cover story on Morgan Rose in your December 2003 issue. Morgan has been one of my biggest influences in the past few years, and it was incredible for me to read some of his background story. Also, Mr. Rose deserves major props for his bombastic stage show. He is hands down the most impressive live drummer I've ever seen. Kudos to *Modern Drummer* for keeping all of us up to date on all the great drummers through the years, as well as introducing us to new up-and-comers.

Zachary Garner
Boise, ID

I would like to commend you for impeccable timing. I received the December issue yesterday, which just happened to be the same day as the Staind/Sevendust/Lo-Pro concert at our local college. Needless to say, I was pumped. As I was walking around the tour buses to get to the front door of the venue, a buddy mentioned that he thought he saw Morgan. I had my copy of *MD* in my pocket, so with high hopes I walked cautiously toward Morgan, holding the mag high. When he saw it, Morgan was surprised. It was his first glance at the cover; he didn't realize it was out yet. I got to chat with him for about an hour while he perused the article—which he autographed for me. Thanks for the great story on a super guy, and for the opportunity to make his day while he made mine.

Michael Bryan
Monroe, LA

Philly Sound Drummers

How exciting to see a feature story on the great Earl Young and Charles Collins. I was already familiar with Earl Young, but I wasn't aware that Charles Collins had played on so many amazing Philly Sound tunes as well. Listening to their classic tracks is a must for any drummer who wants to know how to serve the song. Particularly amazing is the full ten-minute rendition of "Disco Inferno" from the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack. This was recorded in the days before click tracks and drum machine manipulation, but you could set your watch to Earl Young's time! The average drummer would have trouble keeping that groove locked in for two minutes, much less ten.

Thanks for a fantastic article on two drummers who everyone should become familiar with. It's nice to see that these guys are no longer "Standing In The Shadows Of Philly."

Derek Hawkins
Denver, CO

Sherrie Maricle

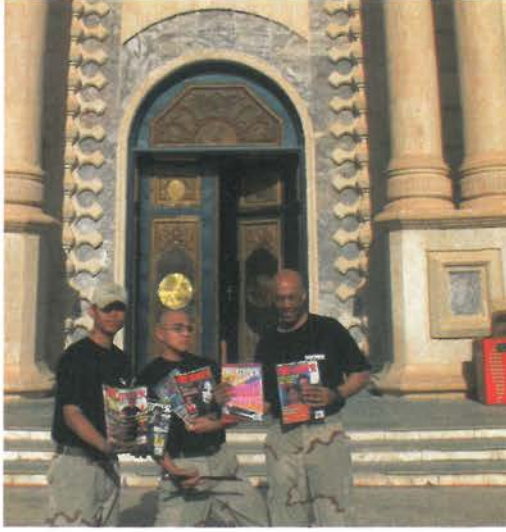
Thanks for Burt Korall's well-written and much-deserved feature article about Sherrie Maricle [December '03 *MD*]. As one can clearly determine from the article, Sherrie is an extremely hard-working drummer on and off the stage. She transforms this work ethic into a very dynamic stage performance.

Several years ago, Sherrie worked with high school musicians at a three-day jazz festival sponsored by our local community college. The culmination of this festival was a concert by Sherrie's band, Diva. Sherrie's performance as a drummer was commanding, but equally impressive was her ability to get the most out these young high school musicians. She is not only an accomplished musician, but also a gifted educator and role model.

Scott A. Bell
Mason City, IA

MD In The Field

Thanks so much for the package that *MD* sent to me out here. I'm sorry for not responding sooner, but we have been touring around, putting on concerts for soldiers all over Iraq. Enclosed is a photo we took with your T-shirts and magazines, in front



of the presidential palace that we stay in on a former Saddam compound. Those in the photo are (from left) myself, percussion specialist Danny Arizmendi from Brownsville, Texas, and staff sergeant Clayton Moore from Waterloo, Iowa,

Your support of the troops deployed here is much appreciated. You make our jobs a lot easier. Thanks again, and God bless America.

Jeff Munoz
Anchorage, AK
Percussion Specialist
4th Infantry Division Ironhorse Band
Stationed In Iraq

How To Reach Us

Correspondence to *MD*'s *Readers' Platform* may be sent by mail: 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, fax: (973) 239-7139, or email: rvh@moderndrummer.com.

Corrections

The feature photos of Morgan Rose in our December 2003 issue, and the contents page photo of Sterling Campbell in the January 2004 issue, were credited to Alex Solca in error. Those photos were taken by Paul La Raia.

We inadvertently omitted the author's bio from Thomas Taylor's August '03 *Jazz Drummers' Workshop* piece, "Comping With Miles And Wynton." Thomas is on the faculty at North Carolina Central University, The University Of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and The University Of North Carolina at Greensboro. He has recorded with Ken Rhodes on the Sea Breeze label, and is on the newly released Steve Haines CD on Artist House. He also has his own self-titled CD. For more information, check out www.Thomasdrum.com.

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How Much For The Jellybeans?

My uncle is thinking of selling his vintage Ludwig Vistalite Quadraplus Jellybean set. It consists of red 9x13, amber 10x14, blue 12x15, and yellow 14x16 concert toms, a green 16x18 floor tom, a blue 14x24 bass drum, and a clear 5x14 snare drum. The hardware includes two cymbal stands, a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, and a Speed King bass drum pedal. Everything is original except for some of the heads.

The bass drum is missing the T-rods and claws for the front hoop (which I have). That drum also has two minor cracks. One runs about 3" long from a lug hole to the edge of the drum. The other is at another lug hole, and is about ¾" long. All of the drums have minor scuffs and scratches, and there is very slight pitting on the chrome. The photo below is not of my uncle's kit, but is identical to it. Can you provide an estimated value for this kit? **Claudio**

MD **drum historian Harry Cangany replies, "The Vistalite Jellybean configuration is rare, which might make it especially appealing to some collectors. On the other hand, the mismatched color scheme wasn't all that popular with working drummers when the kit was new, and that's still the case today. So that may reduce the market for your uncle's kit. I would estimate its value at $1,600, plus or minus 20% for condition."**

Flying With Cymbals

I'm going to be flying from Boston to San Jose for a band gig. Can one carry on a bag full of cymbals these days? My fear is that I'll bring my soft bag full of cymbals to the airport, only to have some overzealous security officer decide that my cymbals are weapons. Then I'll have to check the cymbals, wishing I'd used my hard case instead (which I'd rather not use). I know that the cymbal bag will fit in the carry-on luggage space. I've carried on bigger portfolio cases with artwork and presentation materials. Any advice? **Tim Brunelle**

Different airlines have different policies about such situations. Your best bet would be to take the bag of cymbals to the airport in advance, and get an official ruling—on paper, with someone's signature. You could then show that paper to security and airline personnel when you actually check in for your flight. If the airline is reluctant to allow the cymbals on board, we'd suggest that you avoid the hassle and check them, using your hard case with all possible additional padding and protection.

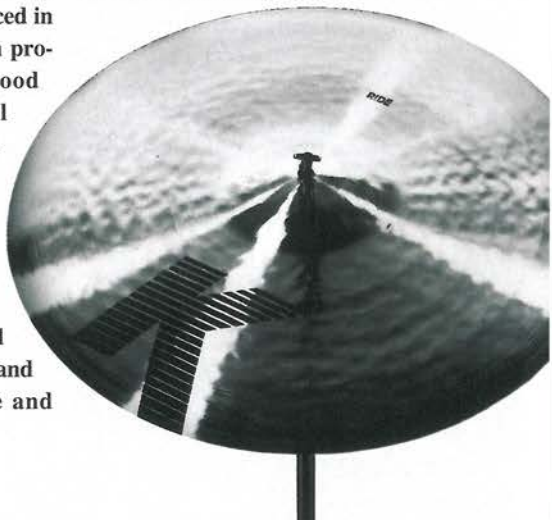
K Custom Jazz Ride

I recently purchased a Zildjian 18" K Custom Jazz ride, and I'm curious about the history of this model. Zildjian no longer offers a Jazz model ride; they now offer Dark rides and Dry rides, among others. While the new model names are more descriptive and would be helpful during a purchase, I'd like to know Zildjian's description for my cymbal, in terms of its thickness, "darkness," "dryness," etc. **Bill Lynch**

We forwarded your question to Zildjian director of education John King. He responds, "The Zildjian 18" K Jazz ride cymbal (not K Custom) was originally introduced in 1984. It possessed a rather high profile (bow) that allowed for good midrange emphasis while still having the low-end body that K cymbals are known for. This medium-light cymbal could be considered as a crash-ride type of instrument with some 'dry' sound qualities.

"In 1991, Zildjian introduced K Pre-Aged rides (in 18", 20", and 22" sizes). They had a shape and effect very similar to the Jazz ride models, but also had other elements of sound that increased their versatility. Jazz ride sales were eventually surpassed by sales of the Pre-Aged models, so they were discontinued in 1995.

"The elimination of certain cymbal models is a necessary process as state-of-the-art manufacturing techniques continually 'raise the bar.' This is not to say that older cymbals have no place in modern music. In fact, they offer special qualities that can *only* be found in older instruments—much like those of the Jazz ride you now possess."



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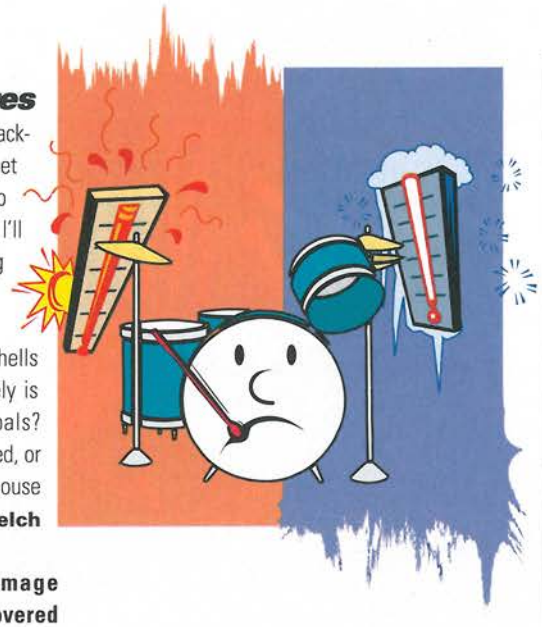
Drums And Temperatures



I just finished soundproofing a shed in my backyard. I live in Denton, Texas, where it can get up to 100° in the summer, and low enough to snow in the winter. When I'm playing my kit I'll have a fan or a heater operating, depending on the season. But they will not be running when I'm not there.

My drum teacher mentioned that drumshells may crack due to too much heat. How likely is this? Also, can temperature affect cymbals? Would it be safe to store my kit out in my shed, or should I shlepp it back and forth from my house when I want to play? **James Welch**

Extremes of temperature can damage drums—particularly their finishes. Covered finishes can melt or bubble under extreme heat. Lacquered finishes can crack due to the expansion or contraction of the shells resulting from changes in temperature. Shells themselves can, in rare instances, become damaged due to moisture as a result of high temperature and humidity, or from condensation that can occur when temperatures cool suddenly in even moderately humid conditions.

Our advice (and that of most drum manufacturers) has always been that any environmental condition in which *you* would be comfortable will also be comfortable for your drums. Conversely, any condition in which you would *not* be comfortable, or which would be dangerous for you, might possibly be equally dangerous for your drums. With that in mind, we'd suggest that you not keep the kit set up in an extremely hot or extremely cold room. Either maintain the climate control (even when you're not there), or store the drums in a safer area and take them to the practice space only when you plan to use them.

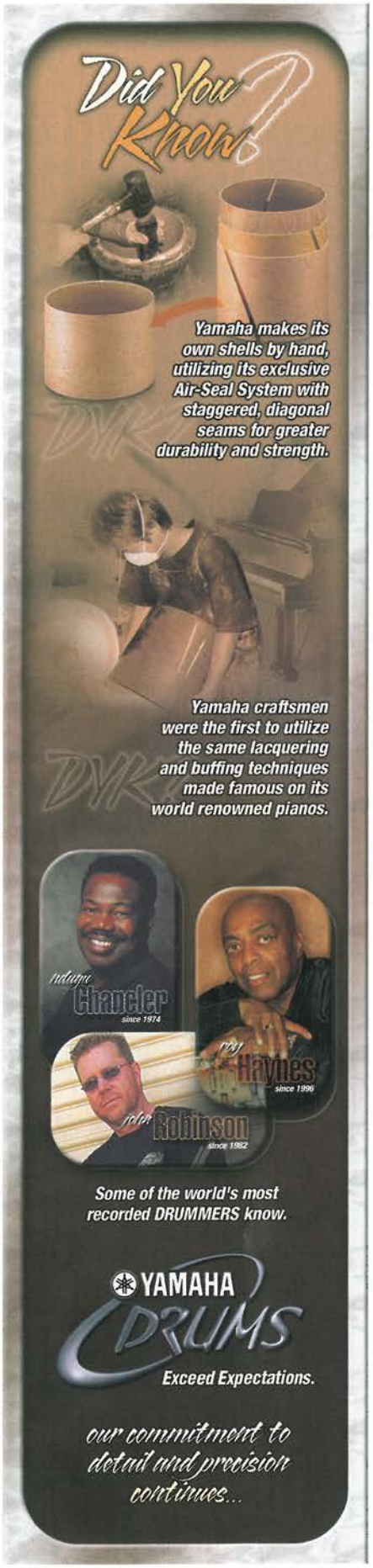
Cymbals are generally not affected by temperature alone. However, certain atmospheric conditions—such as salty, humid air near the sea—can contribute to oxidation and tarnish on cymbals (and on drum hardware). This shouldn't pose a problem for you in Denton, but it still wouldn't hurt to store your cymbals in a padded bag, rather than leaving them set up on the kit.

Starclassic Anniversary Finish

I have a used set of Tama Starclassics I bought from a Guitar Center store about two years ago. The set includes 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 toms, and an 18x20 kick. I'm not sure when the drums were made, but I was told that they were a 25th Anniversary set made in a limited number, and that the finish on the drums was thereafter discontinued. The finish is a blue-green sparkle that looks bold and beautiful under stage lights. I'm wondering how accurate the info I received about the finish is, because I'm hoping to buy a fourth tom. **Andrew**

Tama's Paul Specht replies, "We *think* you have a limited-edition Blue Sparkle Fade kit that was made for Hoshino Gakki's (Tama's parent company) 90th Anniversary in 1998. (Hoshino USA did have a 25th anniversary in 1997.) However, we did make two other sparkle fade finishes exclusively for Guitar Center: Blue Silver Sparkle (BSS) and Blue Gold Sparkle (BGS). For that reason, it would be best if you could take a picture of your kit and send it to Tama, attention Paul Specht, Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020.

"We can make add-on drums for your kit once we know what you have. You can order them through Guitar Center or another authorized Tama dealer."



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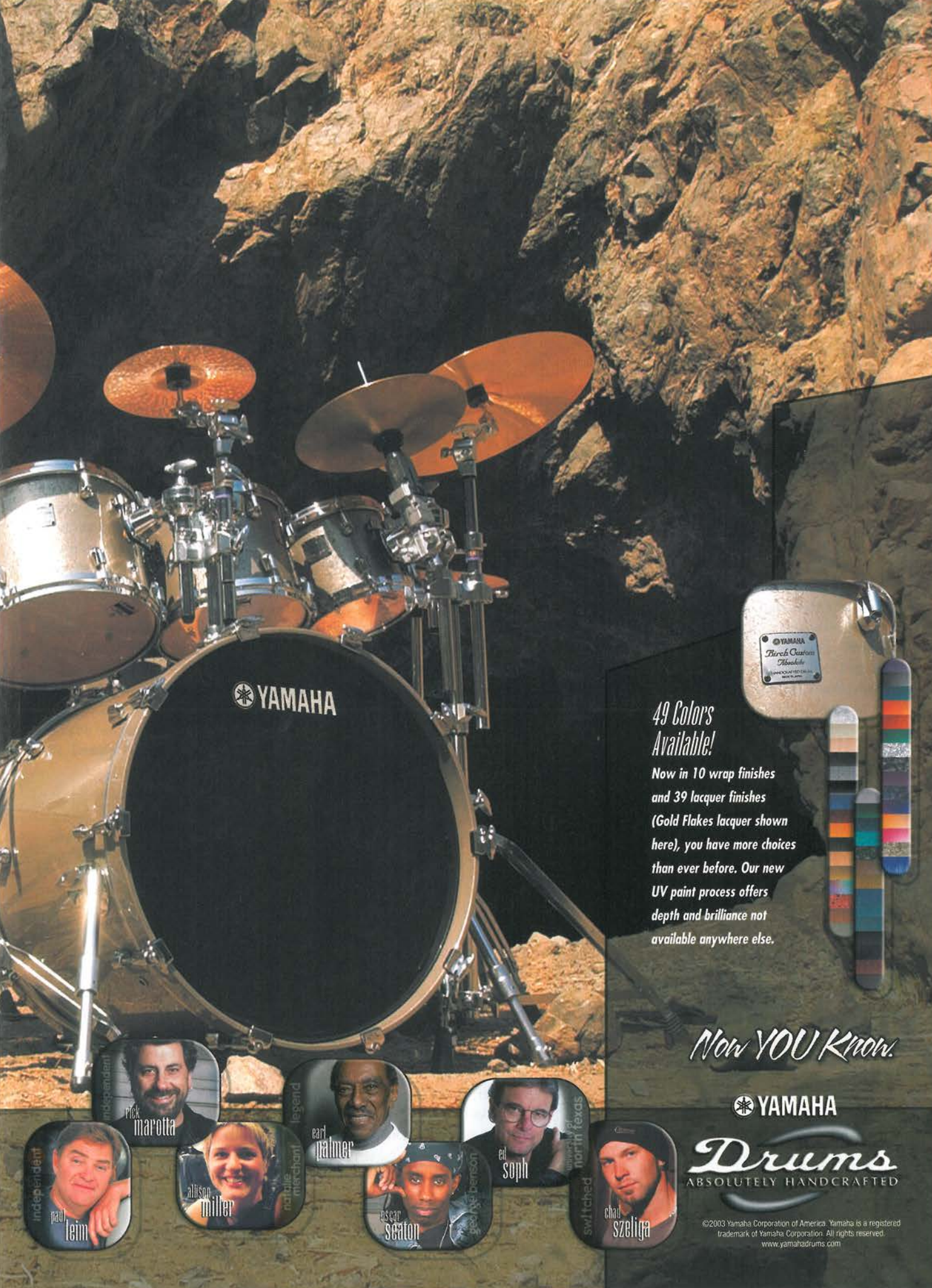
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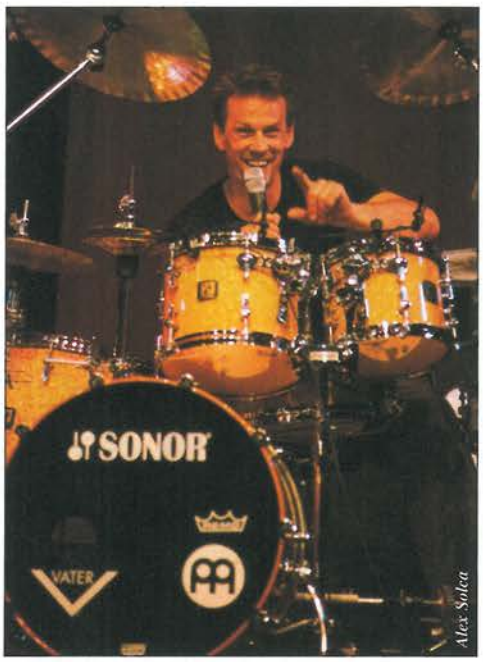
Bass Drum Control Tips From Thomas Lang

Q I'm currently working through Colin Bailey's *Bass Drum Control* book, and I'm having a problem finding the correct alignment between the pedal and the foot. In order to achieve the most control, is it more effective to line up my foot with the footplate, or at an angle? Also, how does seat height affect bass drum control? Thanks for the huge inspiration.

Alex Figueroa



Alex Solca

A *Bass Drum Control* is a great book. Keep plowing through it! As far as foot angle goes, my foot is perfectly aligned with the pedal, as if the footboard was glued to the sole of my shoe. I avoid positioning my foot at an angle, and I never slide my foot up or down the footboard. I maintain the same position at all times. All I do is change between heel-up and heel-down playing, and I occasionally correct my foot position when I slide too far forward.

Drum engineers and technicians spend a lot of time thinking about, experimenting on, and testing drum pedals. One thing they all have in common is experience and know-how. So every pedal is designed to function in a specific way. There is a point on every footboard where the pedal—when played at that particular point—works at its most efficient and most comfortable level and rate. Every pedal has this "target zone" or "sweet spot." I trust the competence of the design engineers, so I pretty much do what they recommend: I transfer my own foot action and power straight to that "target zone." I don't do any uncontrolled sliding or swiveling, no rocking or twisting, no twitching—no nothing. I plant my foot on the pedal and only lift or drop my heel for heel-up and heel-down playing. The ball of my foot will remain in the exact same spot on the pedal while I do this, as I attempt never to move off that "sweet spot."

Seat height greatly affects bass drum technique. I've found that anything below "thighs parallel to the floor" doesn't work for me. I sit very comfortably and naturally, with my hips about 2" higher than my knees, with my legs spread naturally and not too far apart at about a 45° angle.

I also have my kick drum quite far away from me (or so my colleagues keep telling me), so that my knee is angled at about 115°. That position kind of forces me to keep my back straight. With a straight lower back, I feel "on top of things," and I have much better balance. This is essential for more demanding pedal playing.

I also position my cymbals relatively high, so I'm forced to sit with a straight lower back in order to reach everything comfortably.

I used to have muscle cramps in my hips, along with back and shoulder pain from slouching and from sitting too low. But since I adjusted my seat height, I've had no problems whatsoever, and my foot technique has become more relaxed and more powerful.

Matt Sorum
On Cymbal Selection

Q I recently got The Cult's *Music Without Fear* DVD. I love the sound of your Zildjian cymbals on it. Could you please describe in detail what models and sizes you used? Thanks for your time and all the inspiration.

John Strutt

A When I play live, I tend to go for large, thick cymbals. From my left to my right, I use a 19" A crash, an 18" A crash, a 22" Ping ride, a 19" K or 20" A crash, a 20" China, and a 22" crash-ride. For hi-hats I use 15" A Rocks or New Beats. When I'm recording I mix things up with Ks and A Customs. They sound great in the studio, but they're a bit thin for live hard rock.

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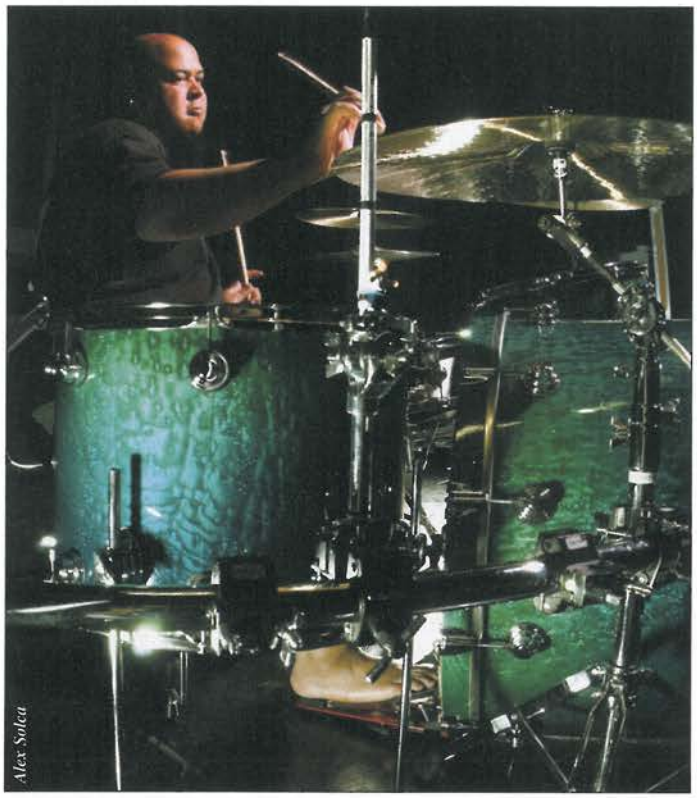
Abe Laboriel Jr.'s Big Bass Drum Sound

Q On the live videos I've seen of the Paul McCartney tour, your bass drum sounds nice and punchy. I would not expect this to be the case with the 20x28 drum you're using. What processing are they using on it? What's your current microphone selection? And are you doing any triggering on your bass drum?

I currently have a 22x22 kick that sounds great. However, like you I'm a big guy (6' 4", 240 lbs.). When I sit behind a 22" or 24" kick, I feel like I dwarf the drum. I realize that a 28" kick will never be as punchy as a 22", but if good tone can be had with a 28" kick, I'd get one in a flat second. **Tim Jones**


Alex Solca

A Thanks for the compliments on my kick drum sound. I love the sound of the 20x28, but it definitely is not the standard, punchy pop sound. I think that it's much more dynamic than a smaller drum. If you play it softly, pulling the beater from the head, it resonates beautifully. If you dig the beater in and rest it on the head, you get a great attack with a low-end rumble. Add padding and you get a good, punchy sound. Unfortunately I don't know the specifics of the miking or the mic' path info for the DVD recording. But I can tell you that we didn't use any triggering. If you're reluctant to commit to a 26" or 28" kick, look into renting one for a couple of days so you can experiment. I think you'll fall in love with it.

Repeat Bar A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I used to work in a General Motors factory unloading wheels and tires from freight cars. It was backbreaking work. Music is work. If you want to be serious about this instrument, be prepared to do the work."

Jazz legend **Elvin Jones,** July 2002

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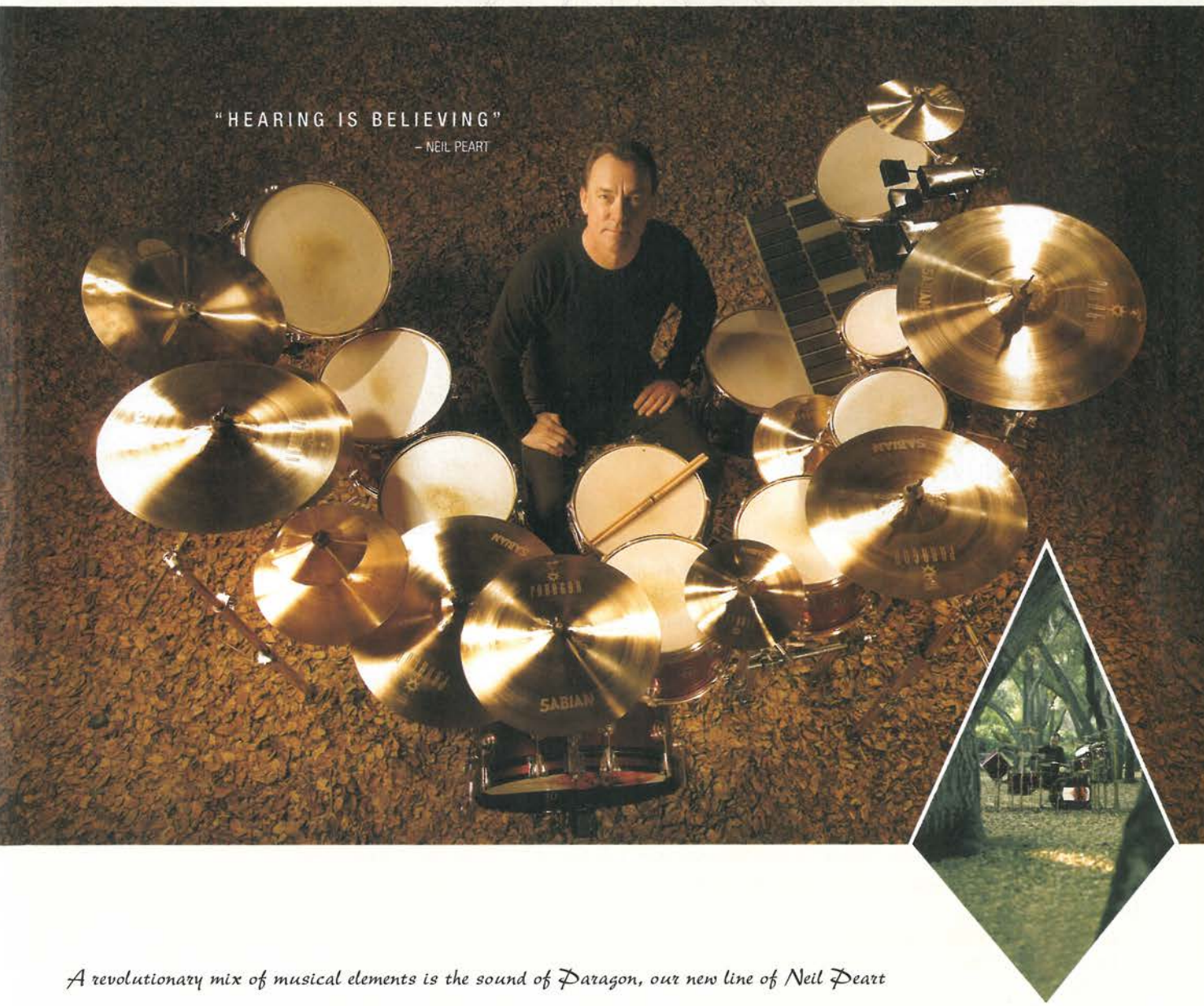

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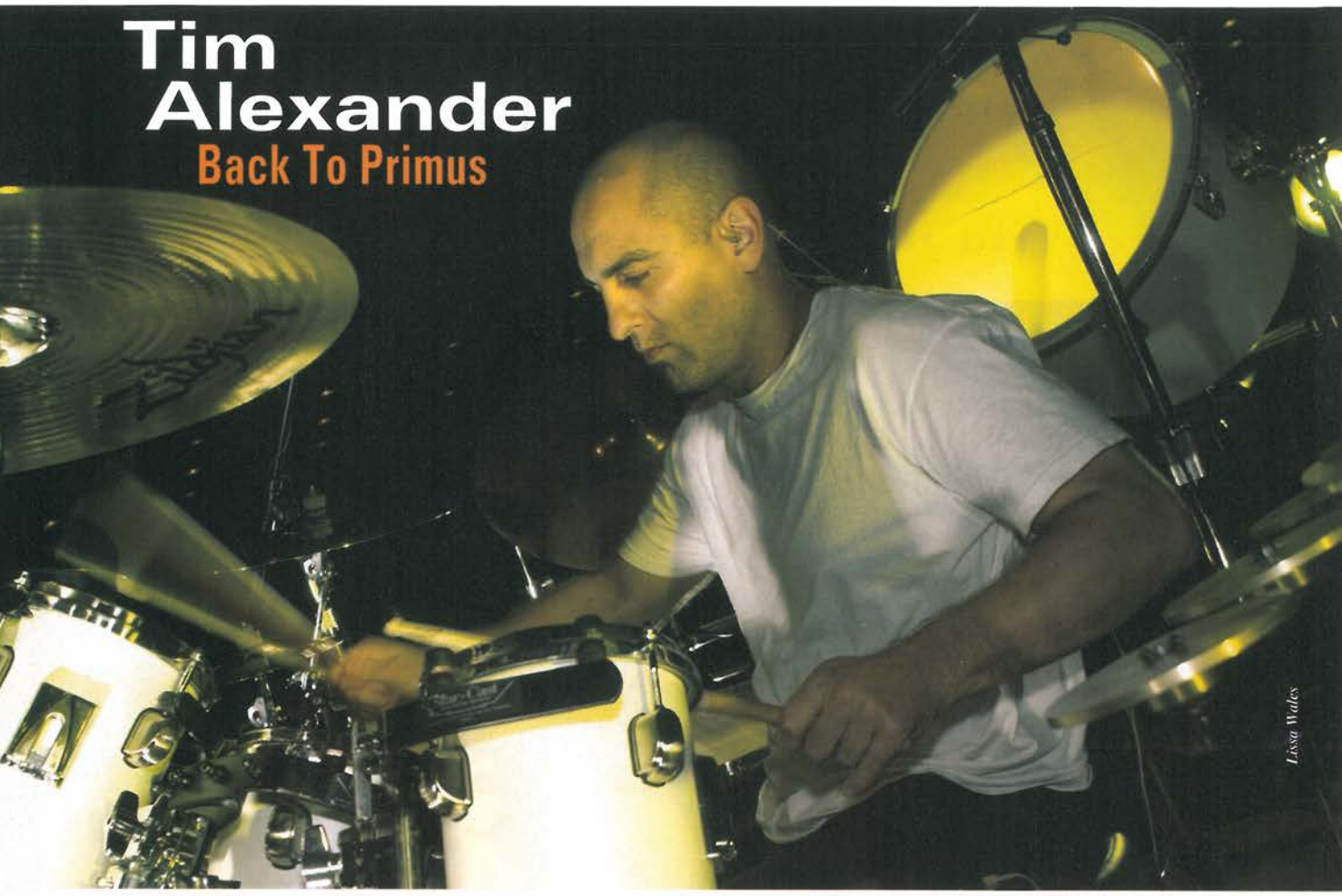
Tim Alexander

Back To Primus



After leaving Primus in 1996, Tim (don't call him "Herb") Alexander has reunited with bassist Les Claypool and guitarist Larry LaLonde to resurrect one of the most popular and cutting-edge rock acts of the '90s. The bizarre, quirky, funk-laced material that Primus built their reputation on was a great vehicle for Alexander, as it drew attention to his abilities to blend rock and funk with a musically creative and authoritative technique.

The band returns with a new "uniquely Primus" five-song CD titled *Animals Should Not Try To Act Like People*. It also includes a DVD retrospective of the band's twelve videos, including the 1992 *Cheesy Home Video* documentary and other tasty tidbits.

So what brought these confused and disturbed lost friends back together? "We had talked about doing a tour," Tim says, "just to have some fun and see what the response would be. Then it turned into making this DVD and recording five new songs. It took a few years of just getting back in touch with each other. But now we're finally hitting the road."

When asked how it feels to be back in Primus after seven years, Alexander replies, "It's like the movie *Groundhog Day*. Sometimes it feels like we never stopped, and the last seven years have been a dream." Has the drummer's attitude changed in regards to the way he approaches the new music? "I think I might be a little bit slower," Tim jokes. "I'm old now."

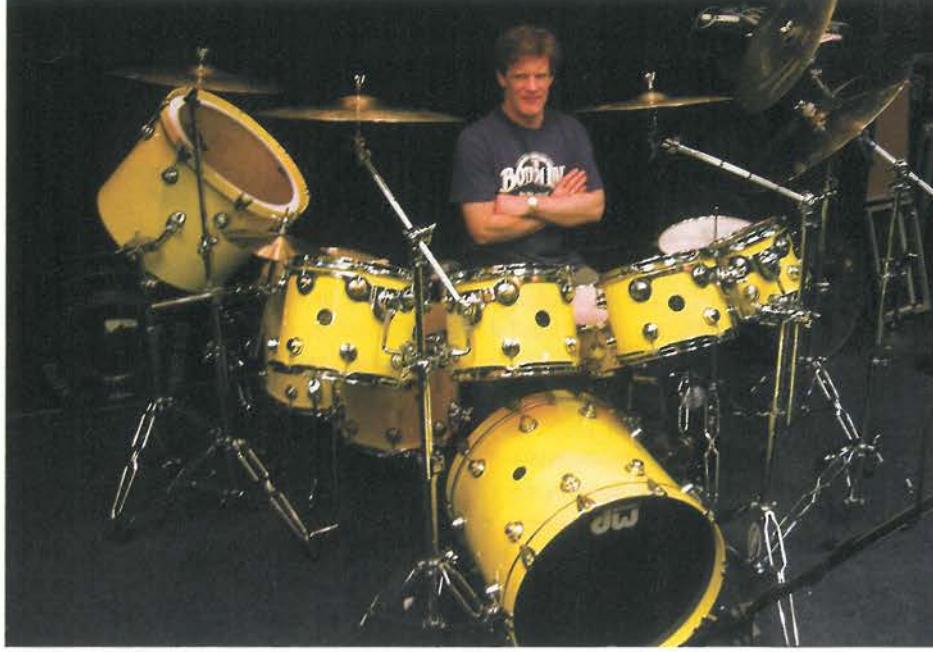
In comparing the new Primus compositions to the past catalog, Alexander states, "Since we've grown a bit, I don't think the same things move us as individuals. We listen to different music than we used to, and that's going to come out in our music."

Tim's current drumkit and cymbal setup is similar to the old days—three racks, two floors, two kicks, four Octobans, and a bunch of cymbals. Tim continues to occasionally fill in with The Blue Man Group (his previous employer) in Las Vegas when drummers are out sick, injured, or on tour. Alexander also has a new DVD, distributed through Hal Leonard, which is a performance clinic filmed in Chicago. "It's just forty minutes of playing," he explains, "and includes a commentary track. It's not your typical drum video." Judging by his musical history, the new Primus music, and the DVD retrospective, "typical" is not a word found in Tim Alexander's musical vocabulary.

Mike Haid

Gary Husband

UK Great Gets Gonged



British drumming god Gary Husband came to international acclaim on such 1980s Allan Holdsworth albums as *Metal Fatigue*, *Atavachron*, and *Sand*. Husband's steamroller drumming has also graced the music of Jack Bruce, Gary Moore, Level 42, and most recently, fusion maestros Gongzilla. Their latest release, *East Village Sessions*, shows Husband to be as tasteful and astute as ever. Gary insinuates a clever backwards Bonham groove for "Aquila," adds graceful textures to "Ging Gong," and goes tribal on "The News."

"Gongzilla goes for real group performances," Husband explains. "It's quite a grilling! I would've preferred to work with a click track, but they wouldn't hear of it. This is all live—the real deal."

Husband endorses Drum Workshop, but played a Tama Starclassic set for *East Village*. However, according to Gary, gear doesn't figure as much into one's growth as does practice. "I just started practicing again after twenty years or so," he admits. "I was never too interested in pursuing drums from a premeditated standpoint. It was just 'the moment' I wanted. Now I'm aiming for more consistency, independence, and control."

Husband's upcoming projects include performances with his Force Majeure group (including Randy Brecker and Jim Beard), a piano trio album called *Gary Husband & Friends—Aspire*, and a solo piano album of John McLaughlin material. Husband can also be heard on the Julian Siegal Quartet's *Close Up*, Steve Toppings' *Late Flower*, and two recordings from Allan Holdsworth: *Bring To Light* and *Then*.

But where is the Gary Husband solo drumming record? "I've spent a long time trying to make a drum album," he replies. "But I refuse to make music that resembles TV cop show themes or that fits into someone's idea of what a fusion album should be. I've been asked to make a retro jazz/rock album evoking Mahavishnu, but this is out of the question. And I will absolutely have nothing to do with anything that involves the word 'shred.' That's a childish frame of reference that has nothing to do with music at all."

Ken Micallef

Depswa's Gordon Heckaman

Drumming For A Dream

"With every drum part I play, I try to complement the other musicians as much as I can," says Depswa drummer Gordon Heckaman. And that attitude is readily apparent, especially on the act's most recent Interscope/Geffen release, *Two Angels And A Dream*. Throw in the disc. After a few tracks you'll notice that while most drummers would battle their bandmates for the foreground—particularly in the intricate, alternative genre that Depswa works in—Heckaman is completely respectful of letting the song be the song. And perhaps that's because he understands the band from another perspective. You see, Heckaman was a fan of the band before he joined the act two years ago.

The buzz over Depswa's recent disc has helped to land them on some major tours, including last summer's OzzFest. "We bumped it up a notch," Heckaman says of the band's live performances. "When I play, I'm pretty visual. I'm a big fan of Morgan Rose of Sevendust, and he's so much fun to watch. I'm not trying to copy him, but I do little arm movements to keep the kids entertained. In fact, a lot of fans I've met have mentioned my playing style, which is cool."

Recording *Two Angels And A Dream* was actually Heckaman's first opportunity to work with a producer. The band enlisted P.O.D. producer Howard Benson to guide their efforts. "I was nervous going into the studio," Heckaman admits. "I'd been in studios before, but not on this level. But Howard really enjoyed my drumming. I think it was the speed that I did everything. I did all of my tracks for the album in three days."

Heckaman found that he benefited on stage from his studio experience. "Benson had me on a steady diet of click tracks for two weeks before we went into the studio," the drummer says. "I had it down. And now I play live on stage to a click track. That's been one of the best things I've learned to do."

Waleed Rashidi

Jason Bittner

Of Shadows Fall Dedicated Metal

Want to know the true meaning of a dedicated drummer? How about warming up your chops on practice pads in the back of a U-Haul trailer at 9:30 A.M. and in 95° weather, all in preparation for taking the stage at 10 A.M. on the grueling second stage at Ozzfest. Welcome to the world of metal drummer Jason Bittner. His band, Shadows Fall, works *hard*, and they've been slaying crowds with their unique blend of old-school metal and modern thrash.

Bittner's drumming is smooth and confident. He has a relaxed technique that allows him to maneuver through the uptempo material with grace. And his playing style perfectly meld's with the band's influences, which reach back to the '70s. "Believe it or not, a lot of us in this band are influenced by the music of Boston," Bittner says. "I'm also a big fan of Slayer and Anthrax. But our musical influences go across the board, from '70s, '80s, and *some* '90s metal. We feel that a lot of '90s metal has run its course. We want to prove that there's still room for a metal band that has melodic and lyrical abilities."

Bittner's biggest metal drumming influences are Dave Lombardo and Charlie Benante, and his favorite technical drummers are Mark Zonder and Neil Peart. "Those guys always play for the song and never overplay," Bittner says. "That's the way I like to play. I don't like the constant double bass stuff. I like to break it up and play fills that enhance the music. I've been working out of Bobby Rondinelli's great book, *The Encyclopedia Of Double Bass*, and also Gary Chester's *New Breed*, to try and strengthen my chops. I'm doing what I can to come up with new ideas that I can bring to our music."

Mike Haid

Pearl

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SIGNATURE CONGAS & BONGOS

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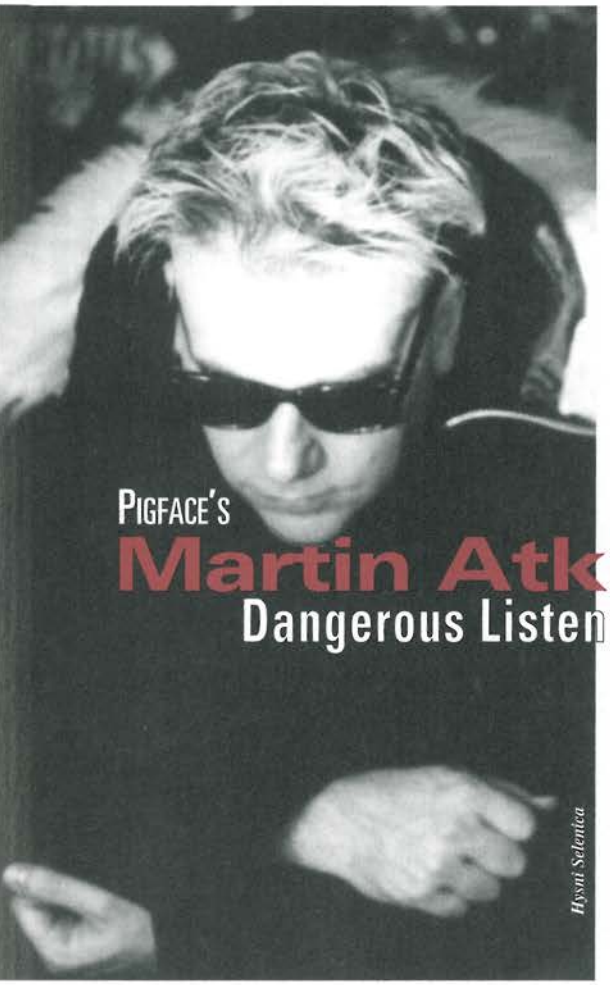


"I have an ability to bring people together, and *that* gives me the opportunity to do something very dangerous." So says drummer Martin Atkins about Pigface, a rotating consortium of musicians conceived of thirteen years ago during a tour with industrial metal forerunners Ministry and KMFDM. Atkins, who has lent his drumming talents to Public Image Ltd., Killing Joke, and Nine Inch Nails, among others, has recently released *Easy Listening...*, an engaging collection of music and spoken word representing the latest Pigface amalgamation.

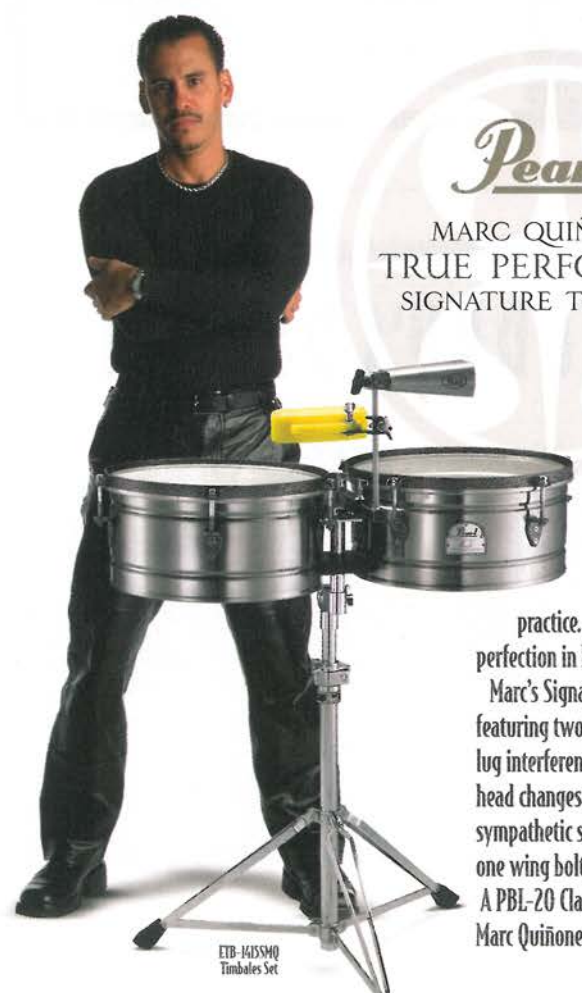
Though Pigface was originally identified with industrial genre artists, Atkins allows the band an open-door policy on the creative front. Over thirty musicians—including Chris Vrenna, members of Kittie, The Rollins Band, and Dope—contributed to the making of *Easy Listening*.... "The whole idea of Pigface is still evolving," Atkins observes. "That feels so great to me."

A multi-talented individual with a staggering work ethic, Martin also runs Underground Inc., an umbrella company of twelve independent, artist-driven record labels, including his own Invisible Records, which has a catalog of over two hundred releases. Becoming immersed in the day-to-day operations of Underground means his drumming often comes second to taking care of business. "I'm more likely to have an opinion about who's creating a fantastic promotional opportunity than who I admire as a drummer," Atkins shares, though he admits to being a fan of Tool's Danny Carey and one-time Pigface collaborator Matt Walker. "I *love* Matt's drumming," he says. "It's just so punchy and precise."

Atkins' many years spent as a producer and engineer have, naturally, colored the way he approaches playing the drums. "I have my own studio," he says, "so I engineer my kit sound. If you listen to some of those massively compressed, limited, overblown drum sounds on the Pigface album, you'll hear that I'm now more interested in the processing rather than the tuning of the kit."

For live performances, Atkins uses a five-piece Pearl set customized with electronic triggers. "That's just to *mentally* trigger a signature sound from an album track to put the listener in that moment," he explains. "I'm very interested in recreating the 'correct' energy of a song—and sometimes that means just one signature sound, like a snare drum crack—to put people in that head space."

Gail Worley



Pearl

MARC QUIÑONES
TRUE PERFORMERS
SIGNATURE TIMBALES

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NEWS

Kenny Aronoff, **Robbie Magruder**, **Greg Morrow**, and **Andy Newmark** are on drums, with **Tom Roady** on percussion, on *The Essential Mary Chapin Carpenter*.

Ronald Bruner Jr. recently completed recording with Suicidal Tendencies. He's also been working with Infectious Grooves.

Eddie Bayers' most recent sessions have been with Kenny Chesney, Michael Peterson, Dobie Gray, Felix Cavaliere, Ricky Skaggs, Jimmy Buffet & Alan Jackson, Willie Nelson, and Toby Keith.

Levon Helm, **Matt Johnson**, and **Sterling Campbell** are on Rufus Wainwright's *Want One*.

Vinnie Colaiuta and **Dennis Chambers** are on Mike Stern's *These Times*.

Bobby Irwin and **Liam Bradley** are on Van Morrison's *What's Wrong With This Picture*.

Manu Katché is on Sting's latest CD, *Sacred Love*. **Keith Carlock** is doing the tour.

Chet Doboe and **Hip Pickles** have been performing quite a bit lately, including a gig "opening" for former NYC mayor Rudy Giuliani.

Chris Parker is on **Ralph MacDonald**'s new solo CD, Eric Marienthal's *Sweet Talk*, and Paul Taylor's *Stepping Out*, and on tracks by Patti Austin and Tom Chapin. Chris has also been doing gigs with Bette Midler, the Baltimore Symphony, Tom Scott, and his own band, Toph-e & The PussyCats.

John O'Reilly has been in the studio with The Trans Siberian Orchestra.

XIII is Mushroomhead's latest release. **Skinny** is on drums.

Ryan Gleason is on The Red West's self-titled CD.

Joey Waronker is on Gavin DeGraw's debut CD, *Chariot*.

Kenny Aronoff and **John Miceli** are on drums, and **Luis Conte** is on percussion, on Meat Loaf's *Couldn't Have Said It Better*.

Mark Walker is on Jim Ridl's *Door In a Field*, Dave Gordon's *Faux Real*, and Andrew Sterman's *Blue Canvas With Spiral*.

Michael Bland, **Andy Sturmer**, and **Noah Levy** are on Mandy Moore's *Coverage*. **Billy Hawn** is on percussion.

Bernie Pershey, **Dave Raven**, **Scott Miracle**, **Kevin Cloud**, **Sergio Gonzalez**, **Brady Blade**, and **Russ Kunkel** all lay it down on Beth Hart's new CD, *Leave The Light On*.

Harvey Mason recently performed at the New England Conservatory's 100th-anniversary celebration.

Joe Forgione, the drummer for The Soul Survivors ("Expressway [To Your Heart]"), recently passed away. Our sincere condolences go to his family and friends.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Karen Carpenter was born on 3/2/50.

Gary Chester drummed on Petula Clark's first US hit, "Downtown." (The tune was awarded a gold record on 3/1/65.)

Tony Thompson hits number-1 the week of 3/22/86 with Robert Palmer's "Addicted To Love."

Live (with **Chad Gracey** on drums) have the number-1 single on the mainstream rock charts with "Lightning Crashes" on 3/25/95.

Happy Birthday!

Roy Haynes (jazz legend): 3/13/25
Graeme Edge (Moody Blues): 3/30/42
Ralph MacDonald (percussion great): 3/15/44
Micky Dolenz (The Monkees): 3/8/45
John Hartman (Doobie Brothers): 3/18/50
Carl Palmer (ELP, Asia): 3/20/50
Kenny Aronoff (session great): 3/7/53
Matt Frenette (Loverboy): 3/7/54
Tony Brock (Rod Stewart): 3/31/54
Slim Jim Phantom (Stray Cats): 3/20/61
Rob Affuso (Skid Row): 3/1/63
Dave Krusen (Pearl Jam): 3/10/66
Brendan Hill (Blues Traveler): 3/27/70
Caroline Corr (The Corrs): 3/17/73

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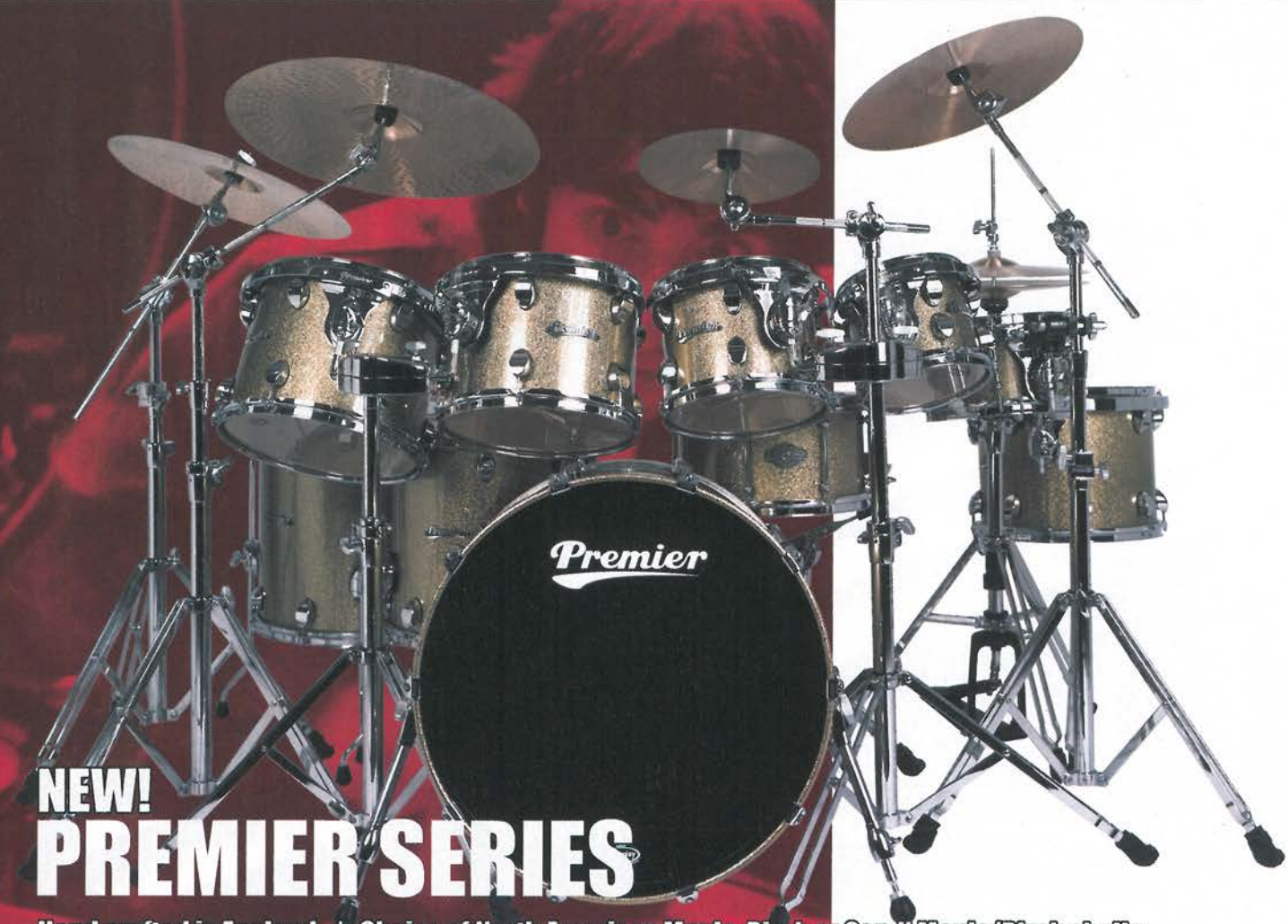

NEW!

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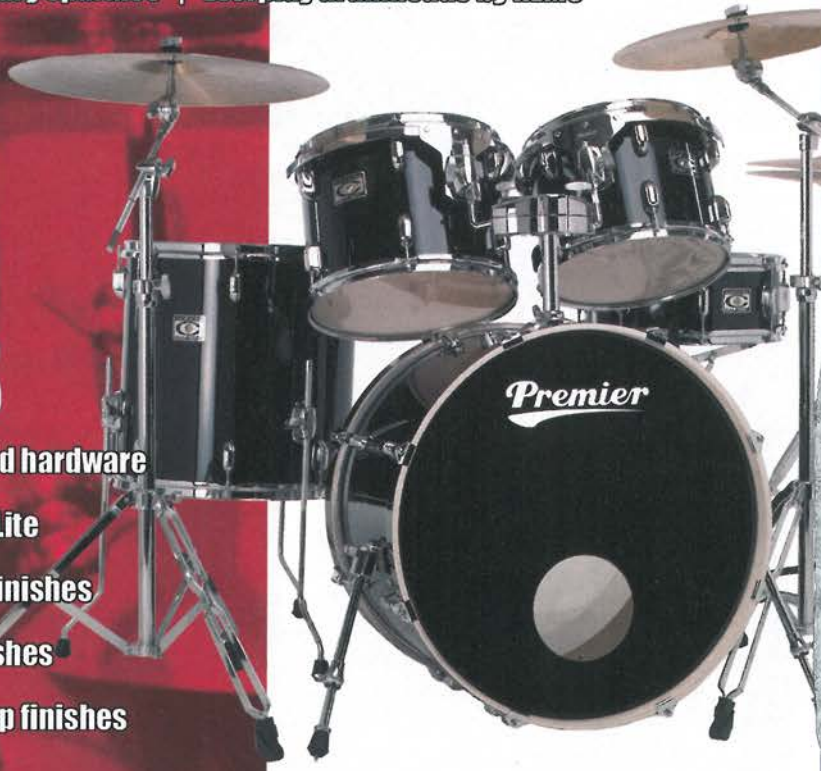

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Yamaha Rydeen Drumkit

God Of Thunder Delivers Entry-Level Excellence

HITS

sonically balanced tone and responsive feel

professional sound and construction at an entry-level price

MISSES

some hardware limitations

by Mike Haid

Yamaha's Rydeen kit is an excellent example of how today's entry-level kits are offering better construction quality and overall sound than ever before. The Rydeen (Japanese for "god of thunder") series has the sound and feel of a high-end kit, with relatively minor concessions in hardware and shell finishes to reduce cost.

The Rydeen kit, which is constructed of 6-ply Philippine mahogany with a high-impact PVC outer covering, is available in three different five-piece configurations. The shells are made using the same proprietary Air-Seal System used to make Yamaha's high-end models, which the manufacturer claims ensures that each shell is perfectly round. Bass drum hardware features Yamaha's original ball-clamp tom mounts. The accompanying hardware package includes a straight cymbal stand, a hi-hat stand, and a snare stand (all double-braced), along with a bass drum pedal. The hardware is manufactured in Yamaha's Indonesian motorcycle factory, where rigorous durability and quality-control standards are kept. Let's inspect these goodies from the "God Of Thunder."

Choices

Rydeen kits come in three configurations. The RD2FS5 model we reviewed features a 16x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, and a 5x14 snare. The RD0F5 kit substitutes a 16x20 kick and a 5x13 snare drum, while the RD2F5 model substitutes 9x12 and 9x13 rack toms and a 16x16 floor tom.

Finishes offered are Night Black, Garnet Red, Racing Green, Royal Blue, and Rydeen Ash, which was the finish our review kit came in. It's a deep metallic plum-colored wrap.

Bass Drum

The 16x22 bass drum comes equipped with wood hoops that secure a clear Remo PowerStroke 3–type batter head and a black front head with no air hole. The drum had a solid punch and beautiful tone that was matched perfectly by the toms. This does wonders for the execution of even-sounding bass/tom combination fills.

The bearing edges were true, and the drum comes fitted with minimal hardware. Both of these factors contribute to maximum projection. The bass drum spurs are sturdy, but they're fixed in length. That means they can't be adjusted to raise the bass drum further from the floor.

Toms

The 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, along with the 14x14 floor tom, are the drums that make this kit a worthwhile investment. Fitted with Remo clear one-ply top and bottom heads and triple-flanged steel hoops, the toms sing with sweet, resonant tones at any pitch. As I mentioned earlier, the toms and the bass drum possess a symbiosis of sound and feel that can take your playing to a higher level of precision because of their smooth and even response.

Snare Drum

The 5x14 wood snare had a dry, direct tone with minimal overtones. The Remo heads were not identified by model, but were similar to a coated Ambassador batter and a clear Ambassador snare bottom. The snare mechanism features a standard throw-off that was easily adjusted, and the drum is equipped with triple-flanged steel hoops.

The snare's sound was very articulate due to its dry nature. But it didn't cut through the volume of a loud, live party band without being miked. The bearing edges were true, but frankly this drum didn't match up to the projecting tonal qualities of the bass drum and toms.

Hardware

The Rydeen hardware held its own quite well in many punishing situations. The bass drum pedal comes fitted with a nylon strap drive and a felt beater. The absence of a solid floor plate made the pedal fairly light, but it also prevented it from giving me a feeling of solid foundation when it came time to really kick it. However, for jazz and most mid-volume playing situations, the pedal was smooth and sturdy. Yamaha's ball-clamp tom-mount arms feature sturdy, five-sided arms that penetrate the shell. Combined with the secure ball-clamp function, I believe they provide more stability and versatility in tom positioning than any other tom mounts on the market. That said, I *didn't* care for the floor tom leg mounts—simply because there are no wing nuts and you need a drumkey to adjust the legs. This is a minor inconvenience during setup and breakdown, but it can be a major problem if you're trying to make quick adjustments while playing.

The straight cymbal stand, hi-hat stand, and snare stand all felt secure while being fairly light. The only notable limitation of the hardware is that the cymbal stand doesn't extend up very high. Perhaps the design focus of this kit is young, fairly small beginners.

Conclusion

I played the Rydeen kit on professional gigs that ran the gamut of musical styles. I never once thought of it as an "entry-level" kit, because, frankly, it never felt or sounded like one. Even allowing for the limitations of the snare drum, the kit sounded great in every situation.

The quality of craftsmanship and materials used to build the Rydeen kit make it a very strong contender in the highly competitive entry-level market. The God Of Thunder knew what he was doing when he designed this kit.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 16x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 floor tom, and 5x14 snare. Philippine mahogany shells, offered in Night Black, Garnet Red, Racing Green, Royal Blue, and Rydeen Ash covered finishes. Hardware package includes ball-clamp tom-mounting system, bass drum pedal, straight cymbal stand, snare stand, and hi-hat stand.

List price **$849**

(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.

Quick Looks

H3 DrumScience DrumStick Wax

H3 DrumStick Wax is a grip aid for drumsticks that comes in a reusable 2-oz. tin. (The empty tin would be handy for storing drumkeys, snare strings, and the like.) The wax is dyed indigo blue and has a tropical scent. The goal of the product is to give you a solid grip on your drumsticks without making your hands messy or sticky.

To use the H3 wax, you remove the block from the tin and apply it to the grip area of the sticks. You can put it on directly before playing, or during your session. You don't have to wait for it to dry; it's instantly ready to go.

You don't need to reapply the wax for each gig if there is some on the sticks already. It's heat-activated, so it "wakes up" once you've handled your sticks for a few seconds. I tried the wax on many pairs of sticks for use on different types of gigs, and it gave me a solid grip without leaving a sticky residue. I'd never tried a product like this before, and I was very pleased with the results. My wife also uses it on her timpani mallets.

H3 DrumStick Wax has a five-year shelf life, even after being opened. H3 DrumScience will also be marketing a wax removal tool in keychain form, so that you can remove the old coat and reapply a new one if you wish. Retail price varies from $5.99 to $7.99 depending on location.

(401) 619-0258, www.h3drumscience.com.

Chap Ostrander

UFIP Brilliant Series Cymbals

Brilliant Idea!

HITS

applicable to all musical styles

monstrous 18" crash

excellent hi-hats

good looks under lights

MISSES

14" cymbal is gongy

by T. Bruce Wittet

For those who are unfamiliar with the name, UFIP (Unione Fabbricanti Italiani Piatti) has been manufacturing cymbals in Pistoia, Italy since 1931. The brand is well regarded in Europe and has been making quiet inroads into the American market over the past few years.

Recent UFIP reviews, such as *MD*'s September '03 examination of the company's exotic tiger-striped China cymbals, fuelled my suspicions that UFIPs have become "artsy" instruments. However, only *seconds* into my testing of the new Brilliants, I realized that these are versatile, workaday cymbals.

It's UFIP's policy not to stamp "ride," "crash," or "China" on its cymbals, leaving drummers to employ any given cymbal as they see fit. For example, one of the cymbals we received was stamped with *"20"/51 centimeters, Made in Italy,"* followed by the weight in grams. To simplify things for this review, I viewed that one as a ride, and everything 18" and under as a crash or splash. Hi-hats are factory-paired.

UFIP cymbals are manufactured by a method called "rotocasting." Molten B20 bronze alloy is poured into molds that spin at high speed. The cymbal pops out of the mold with its rough profile and bell clearly visible. UFIP claims that this process, as opposed to the more common one in which bells are hammered out or hydraulically stamped, results in added "beef" in the middle of the cymbal. After hammering and lathing, the Brilliants are buffed in a proprietary process that smoothes over the tonal grooves, leaving a lustrous, reflective finish.

Not Your Basic Rides And Crashes

Our review batch included 12", 14", 15", 16", 17", 18", and 20" cymbals, along with 13" and 14" hats. The line also includes 8" and 10" splashes, 22" rides, and 18" and 20" Chinas.

The 20" ride is a medium-heavy cymbal that features a porcelain-like ping and moderate wash. At a club, that ping was audible even when the amps were turned up on stage. When I laid into the bell, it gave out a hearty, Latin-ish clang without exciting the body too much. The crash, if you can call it that, was an unfocused explosion in the lower mid frequencies.

In the studio, I found the 20" ride's version of "ping" remarkably pleasant. It seemed to straddle the line between "K-style" wash and more contemporary clarity. With this potential in hand, I'd carry it to any recording date as an option. Its emphatically "middle" frequency response travels well from style to style.

The 18" was one of my favorites. Although it had passable ride characteristics, it made a *killer* crash. Mind you, it took some getting used to, especially in the testing room, where I found it a little overbearing. But when I put the cymbal in context—struck in unison with a 16" floor tom, for example—I was smitten. It produced frequencies ranging from rich, deep lows to stinging highs. The sustain was long but not out of control.

By this point, I was beginning to realize that UFIP Brilliants are not your typical thin crashes. They all seemed to be a wisp heavier—and to exhibit a little less flex—than crash cymbals I would ordinarily choose. But the payoff is crashes that you can hear from the throne *and* the back rows—which I verified by having someone else give the cymbals the old one-two while I roamed out front.

Surprisingly, the 17" crash had enough "tonal distance" to be paired with the 18" and still produce a sufficiently wide pitch interval. Understandably, it lacked a little of the power of the 18", but retained the basic character. The 15" and 16" Brilliants exploded quickly and then got out of the way. I'd use either as a primary crash in low- to moderate-volume situations. As with all of the Brilliant test cymbals, they were mallet- and brush-friendly, emitting a variety of overtones not immediately obvious with sticks.

Something curious happened when I tested the Brilliants in a recording studio. In two separate sessions in the same room, two different engineers lowered the overhead mic's from their customary position of a foot above the cymbal line. This indicated to me that, despite my perception of a little extra weight, these weren't overly loud, raucous cymbals that were blowing up the overheads. On playbacks, the cymbals had good presence, with the 16" and 18" making a particularly effective pair. In fact, they had me challenging my habit of employing at least one paper-thin crash.

Perhaps I spoke too soon, though. Fact is, I wouldn't have *minded* if the 14" were paper-thin. To me, it was just too thick at the edges and slow in response to make an effective crash. I say "to me" because I know that some metal head is going to find it perfect when competing with amp stacks. Similarly, the 12" was also heavier than a conventional splash, but it spoke quickly and sharply. I'm certain that the additional weight would give it extra mileage over garden-variety thin splashes.

Your Basic Dream Hats

The Brilliant hi-hats made me *want* to play them. The top cymbals were medium in weight; the bottoms were heavy and featured two holes to prevent vacuum airlock. I started with the 14" in the testing room, and immediately discovered that they had what I look for in hi-hats—in *spades*. First of all, the top cymbal had several sweet spots that made shank-to-tip stick patterns come to life. When I relaxed the pedal, leaving the two cymbals "just kissing," a touch of the stick would set them sizzling for a good three or four seconds. And the chick they made when closed with the foot was solid, but not necessarily loud. It cut through sufficiently for live applications, and quickly became my first choice for studio sessions. I regret the day these babies went back to UFIP.

The 13" pair wasn't shabby, either. Their overall tone, chick, and body was a little high-pitched in relation to comparable models from other brands in my collection. But it was not an abrasive high. Again, that sizzling sound was evident with the cymbal plates barely touching, and, again, the stick sound was light and well defined. Despite their relatively high pitch, I'd recommend these as primary hats, or as truly excellent auxiliary hats.

Conclusion

The UFIP Brilliants are a versatile line of cymbals that fall well within the price range of working drummers. The 18" crash stood proud for me, and this comes from a guy who owns well over a hundred cymbals. It was *that* special. Likewise, the hats were among the best I've played. Because of the Brilliants' slight additional weight and unique character, I'd caution against ordering them by mail (at least, not the 14"). Last word: They look pretty groovy under stage lights!

THE NUMBERS

12"	$239
14"	$295
15"	$337
16"	$351
17"	$379
18"	$409
20"	$494
13" hats	$545
14" hats	$587

(514) 488-9564, www.ufip.com.

Quick Looks

HQ Percussion Mucho Pad

HQ Percussion and percussionist Daniel de los Reyes have teamed up to produce the Mucho Pad. It's a practice pad designed to replicate a set of timbales with two mounted cowbells. One drum surface is gum rubber and the other is neoprene, which provides two different playing feels as well as subtle pitch differences. The neoprene pad also has a slightly raised rim to practice rimshots on. Both surfaces feel great to warm up on with timbale sticks or regular drumsticks. The pad has a non-slip bottom to prevent it from moving when you wail on it. It can also be turned over and used as a warm-up pad for hand drumming.

The two neoprene cowbell pads represent the high and low bell of a timbale setup. They're set on a piece of wood that's slightly raised above the timbale pads. This piece is attached to the pad by hook-and-loop fastener strips, and can be removed for transport or storage.

The Mucho Pad is a great practice aid for drummers or percussionists. It also provides a terrific pick-up line on the road: Oyé muchacha! Wanna come up to my macho pad and see my Mucho Pad? (Okay, I'm done.) List price is $75.95.

(314) 647-9009, www.HQpercussion.com.

Norman Arnold

Cadeson Studio Wiz Drumkit

Compact Size, Classic Sound

HITS

Conservative finish with classy touches

Warm tonal sounds combined with good projection

by Kevin D. Osborne

Cadeson is one of the emerging brands from the Orient that have quietly but aggressively been making inroads into the US percussion market. They're no newcomer; they've been in business for over seventeen years. Along with other musical instruments, they design and manufacture all of their own drumshells and hardware. They currently offer six series of drumsets, from entry-level to professional. The Studio Wiz reviewed here is a high-end kit targeted at jazz players.

How's It Look?

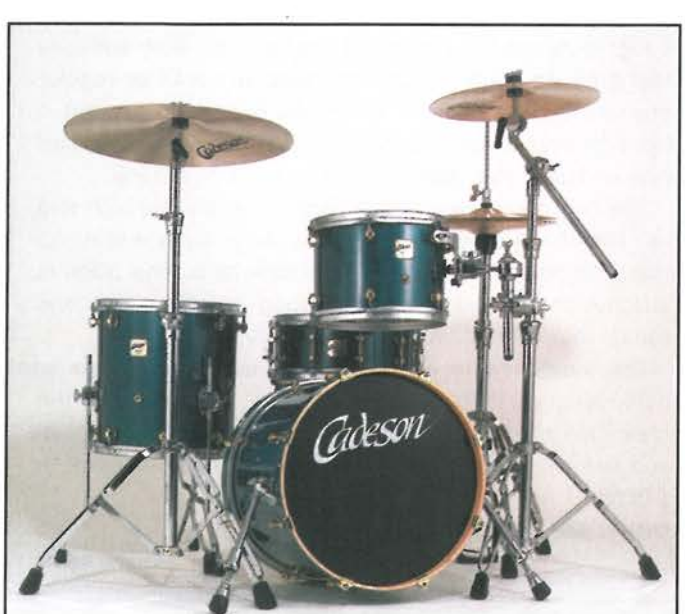
The Studio Wiz features the traditional small drum sizes of older jazz kits, but with some interesting twists. The 14x18 bass drum is not only smaller than the common 22" pop/rock kick, it's also smaller than the 20" jazz bass drums of the 1950s and '60s. The floor tom is a fairly standard 14x14, but the rack toms are more akin to sizes we designate today as "fast toms": $7\frac{1}{4}$x10 and $8\frac{1}{4}$x12. The ten-lug snare drum measures $5\frac{1}{2}$x14.

Our review kit came finished in a high-gloss clear lacquer that allows the natural maple grain to show through. The edges of the shell are darkened, creating a "natural maple fade" effect. Running around the center of each drum is a fleur-de-lis stencil in a stain about one shade darker than the maple. This is pleasing to the eye and adds a little personality to the otherwise conservative look of natural wood.

Cadeson's lugs are gold-plated solid-metal cubes a little over $\frac{1}{2}$" square, each with a tension rod tube on top and an ornamental bead on the bottom. The badges, vent holes, and bass drum claws are also gold-plated. The tom-mount suspension plates and the rims are zinc-plated, which adds a satin look to the finish. This limited use of gold plating in combination with the zinc looks classy without being ostentatious. The wing nuts are stylishly curved and easy on the fingers. The rack toms are suspended with plates bolted into two of the six lugs and not connected to the rims or tension rods (which means you can change heads without removing the drum from the setup).

What's It Made Of?

The most interesting item to note about the Studio Wiz drums is their shell construction. These days, although there are some 4-ply maple drums made, most feature six or more plies. That's true of Cadeson's drums as well—except for the Studio line. There they've done something unique.



In the 1960s the major drum manufacturers constructed their drums of 3-ply high-quality mahogany, with 3-ply maple reinforcing hoops. Cadeson maintains that while this construction gave those drums warmth and tonality, they did not project as well as newer drums. To remedy this, they have created a 3-ply shell with a 3-ply reinforcement ring, both of maple. According to Cadeson, "The tone is a combination of focused projection with vintage warmth." (The snare drum features 5-ply reinforcing rings for additional strength against the higher head tension usually used on snare drums.)

To further improve the sound of the drums, the lugs are attached to the shells with only one fully drilled hole per lug. With 50% fewer penetrations, more of the shell area is open and free to vibrate, thus enhancing the tone and resonance of the drum.

How's It Sound?

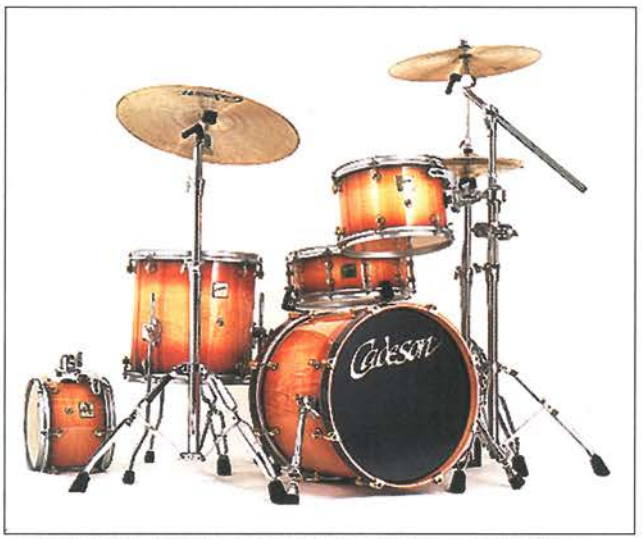
Okay, let's talk about that tone and resonance. In order to get an accurate impression of the sound of the toms, I de-tuned them all and

then tuned them back up. I found plenty of tone at the low end, but the resonance began to come through more at the middle to upper segments of the tuning range.

All of the toms had a nice tonality that was reminiscent of 1960s drums. They also had some punch, in the form of a pointed attack with a pronounced ring that carried well. This was no doubt a function of that hard maple reflecting the sound around and out of the drum. When I replaced one of the factory-provided coated Remo Ambassador tom heads with a clear Ambassador, the tonality was still there, but not the same depth or warmth. The attack was much more audible. I preferred the sound of the coated heads. They carried just fine, and the tone was warmer and more appropriate for jazz. I think Cadeson made the correct choice of heads for this set.

The bass drum proved deceptive. Though small in size, it wasn't small in sound. A good stomp on the pedal yielded a solid yet tonal thump that stood out in the beat and under a fill. Though not identified, the batter head looked like a modern dampened model. The front head had no hole in it. This combination increased the ring while adding some bottom to the sound.

Normally, with a thin 3-ply shell, more of the shell vibrates and less air is moved. This means you get a warm tone, but less sound projection. Not so with this drum. The maple construction, reinforcement rings, and wooden hoops seem to be enough to stiffen the shell and transfer a lot of the vibration from the head to both the drumshell *and* the air inside it. This results in the air (and hence the sound) bouncing back and forth inside the drum, amplifying it to a respectably audible level.



Our review kit featured this maple fade finish. The finish also included a fleur-de-lis stencil around the center of each drum (not shown in this photo).

The snare drum produced a sound that was fully present, and then made a quick, controlled exit. There was little extended after-ring. This is an articulate snare with no need to rely on a metal shell to bounce and amplify the sound. Ringing rimshots left the snares sizzling, and single strokes were clear and well defined. Press rolls were full of buzz, and backbeats sounded solid and woody. This snare is a nice complement to the pleasingly tonal toms and vocal bass drum.

How's The Hardware?

As mentioned earlier, the rack toms use a suspension-type mount. The tom arms are $^{7}/_{8}$" rods with ball & socket adjustments. This offers quick, easy, and infinite positioning. The bottom rods are held by clamps mounted to the cymbal stands; there are no mounts on the bass drum. Plastic tips on the end of the tom rod and felt pads on the tom protect the drum when inserting the rod through the mount.

The bass drum pedal is a double-chain affair with adjustments to change the angle of the footboard, the tension, and the pedal throw. It has a full baseplate, spring-tensioned spurs, a built-in drumkey holder on the left side, and a side-mounted adjustment to tighten the pedal to the hoop. The beater is reversible, with two differently shaped felt impact heads.

This is a nicely responsive pedal; double beats were easy to play, and it had a smooth feel. The pedal shaft is keyed at the upper right side so it can be used as a slave in a double pedal setup, which is available from Cadeson.

The double-braced hi-hat has a large, single-chain drive. It features a ten-position tension adjustment, as well as a clever two-piece geared assembly that the bottom cymbal sits on. As you lift and rotate the upper half of this assembly, the horizontal angle changes and tilts the cymbals. The pedal feels solid and reliable when you stomp on it, and splashes are easy to execute.

The kit features one straight cymbal stand and one convertible boom stand. These are double-braced and sturdy, and they can support a cymbal and a tom each with no wobbling. They also incorporate clutch-type tilters that allow smooth and infinite cymbal positioning.

The double-braced snare stand uses a ball & socket basket tilter. This makes it convenient and quick to adjust, and again offers infinite positioning. I even turned it a full 90° so that the snare was perpendicular to the floor, then played the drum with a bass drum pedal. The height of the stand can be adjusted from a low of 14" (from the floor to the bottom of the snare drum) to a high of 22". The basket can be removed from the snare stand with a drumkey for easy pack-up.

So What Do We Think?

This is a very nice drumset. The stenciling enhances the natural wood finish, while the gold plating adds a touch of class. The kit is small, but the sound is not, and it produces a nice combination of warmth and projection. The hardware is sturdy and offers some nice features.

I think this kit would work well for a jazz combo, and even for a moderately loud rock group (if miked up properly). I love the fast-size toms; they're easy to handle, offer great setup flexibility, and sound every bit as good as larger toms. Though it's a compact package, the Studio Wiz kit has a lot to offer.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 14x18 bass drum, 7¼x10 and 8¼x12 rack toms, 14x14 floor tom, 5½x14 snare drum. Shells are 3-ply maple with 3-ply reinforcing rings. (Snare features 5-ply reinforcing rings.) Gold-plated lugs, zinc-plated drum rims. Hardware package includes bass drum pedal, along with straight and boom cymbal stands, snare stand, and hi-hat stand (all double-braced).

List price **$2,200**

(626) 369-0253, www.cadesonworld.com, www.cadesonmusic.com.

Gibraltar 8600 Flat Base Hardware

Talk About Your "Less Is More"

HITS

outstanding construction quality

professional performance and features

ultra-light weight

by Rick Van Horn

Over the years I've been a strong campaigner for lightening one's load when it comes to equipment. I truly believe that reducing the weight of your gear will help to prevent injury and promote career longevity.

I also believe in the old adage about using the right tool for the job. For example, if you want a 20" China crash six feet up in the air, you're definitely going to need a heavy-duty, double-braced cymbal stand with a huge tripod spread in order to support that cymbal. However, if you're one of the thousands of drummers out there schlepping their own equipment to clubs or wedding gigs, you can be perfectly well served by much lighter hardware. Of course, it must be up to contemporary standards of functionality and performance.

I add that last provision because up until recently, if you wanted a lightweight, vintage-type stand, you had to actually *find* a vintage-type stand. Any new, ultra-lightweight hardware on the market was usually at the low end of a manufacturer's line, or was a cheapo no-name item likely to collapse under even moderate professional use. And whether you used a vintage piece of equipment or a newer one, features like tilters and height adjustments were minimal at best.

Fortunately, the past couple of years have seen the introduction of new stands that are based on vintage designs, but incorporate up-to-date features and the advantages of modern manufacturing technology. One such line is Gibraltar's new 8600 series.

An Overall Look

Each 8600 stand features a compact tri-leg base. The wingbolt is reinforced by an added drumkey lock to secure the base into position with no slippage. This allows you to adjust the legs of the tripod from completely flat to a fairly steep angle, making it easy to place stands close to one another without getting their legs tangled. All the stands feature die-cast parts, with nylon bushings that prevent metal-to-metal contact at the height adjustments.

Cymbal Stands

The 8610 straight and 8609 boom cymbal stands provide enough height adjustment to serve most traditional setups. The boom stand won't get that China six feet in the air, but it'll put a 16" crash over your rack toms just fine.

One particularly nice feature of the cymbal stands is a gearless tilter that's adjusted by a large, easy-to-handle wingnut (and secured by yet another key lock). This tilter rotates around a central shaft, providing infinite adjustment. Gone are the infamous cheapo ratchet tilters that never let you position a cymbal the way you want it.

Snare Stand

The 8606 snare stand features a gearless basket adjustment for infinite positioning capability. (Nice!) It also features a large, easy-to-grip handle to secure the drum within the basket. The stand offers a surprisingly wide height-adjustment range—going high enough to serve as a stand-up concert stand for a young drummer.

Hi-Hat

Lightweight hi-hat stands often seem too wimpy to withstand any serious stomping. Not so with the 8607 hi-hat. It's made plenty tough. It also offers features you'd expect from a pro-quality unit, including adjustable spring tension, anti-creep spurs, a memory lock for height adjustment, a key-lockable clutch, and very smooth performance.

And the best part of this hi-hat is that at a measley eight pounds, it's the *heaviest* of all the 8600 stands.

Conclusion

Unless you're a heavy hitter on a heavy-metal tour on which you're bashing heavy cymbals with heavy sticks (are you beginning to see a theme here?), there's nothing that Gibraltar's new 8600 stands couldn't do for you. They're superbly made, they offer professional functionality, they're priced attractively—and they're so light you can practically juggle them. What's not to love?

THE NUMBERS

8610 straight cymbal stand	**$ 69.95**
8609 cymbal boom stand	**$ 89.95**
8606 snare stand	**$ 89.95**
8607 hi-hat stand	**$119.95**

(860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.

Quick Looks

Zildjian 18" Oriental Crash Of Doom And Azuka Timbale Cymbals

The 18" Oriental Crash Of Doom is a smaller version of the original 20" model that was designed with input from Dennis Chambers. It's a medium-thin, dry, trashy-sounding effects cymbal. It isn't pretty—in fact it looks bent and battered, with a double-layered lathing and hammered design. Its attack is subtly pronounced at low volumes but really sharpens and penetrates when the cymbal is struck firmly. Its wash of sound produces dark overtones with a medium decay. This ugly duckling could work well as a dark crash or ride with a clean bell sound in a jazzy situation, as an accent cymbal in a louder musical environment, or for heavy crash-riding applications. List price is $292.

The all-new 18" Azuka Timbale cymbal is a redesign of the original. Zildjian worked with Latin percussion master Alex Acuña to perfect this versatile effects cymbal. The structural design is similar to that of the 18" Crash Of Doom, but the Azuka features large circular hammering as opposed to the COD's smaller hand-hammered look. The cymbal's brilliant finish seems to mellow the attack, especially on the bell, which gets swallowed up in the wash and spread of overtones the longer you stay on the cymbal. As a result, ride characteristics are not well defined and seem to get lost in the music. However, when the Azuka is crashed, the attack is solid, bright, and punchy, leading to a beautiful wash of sound. List price is $280.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Mike Haid

Wahan Snare Drums With Vario Lifter

Yet More German Ingenuity

HITS

overall drum quality and sound is top-notch

Vario Lifter is well-designed and easy to use

MISSES

Putting the Vario Lifter at knee height can put the drumhead too high to be comfortable to play

effect of Vario Lifter depends on specific combination of head tension

by Paul Bielewicz

I have to admit, at first I was skeptical. "Another snare drum gimmick, eh? What is it this time?" But my skepticism gradually went away as I got the hang of what may very well be one of the coolest new snare-drum innovations in years.

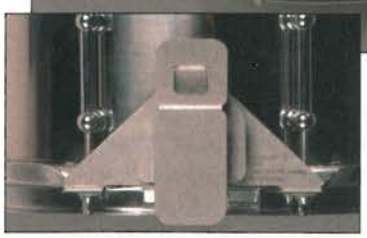
Wahan Technologies' Vario Lifter is a mechanism that allows the user to adjust snare tension—and even to turn the snares on and off—all without missing a beat. It works via a lever that moves horizontally, where a traditional lifter arm would move vertically. A large plate attached to this lever allows the user to turn the snares on and off with his or her knee.

You may ask why this is necessary. I tried to think of any playing situation in which I'd wished that could turn the snares on or off, or adjust them on the fly in the middle of a song. I really couldn't think of anything. Sure, every now and then I'll play a song with the snares turned off, but I've always made the change between songs. But then I realized that I was only thinking this way because I'd never *had* the ability to change the snares in the middle of a song. Having this option available to me opened up a whole new world of cool possibilities.

Our review group consisted of three stainless-steel snare drums: a 4x14 Funkmaster, a 5x14 Studiomaster, and a 6x14 Stagemaster. Each drum had a highly polished mirror-finish exterior and a brushed (matte) interior. They were fitted with identical RMV one-ply coated heads, triple-flanged steel hoops, and solid tube-style lugs. And they were all equipped with Vario Lifters.

The Vario Lifter

The design of the Vario Lifter itself is quite ingenious. Its elbow lever allows the user to achieve control of it quite easily from either an "on" or "off" position. The mechanical tension of the Vario Lifter seems much lower than that of a traditional snare throw-off. But it's perfectly adequate; it keeps the snares at proper tension without allowing them to slip or loosen up during repeated use.



The Vario Lifter allows the player to alter snare tension using knee pressure

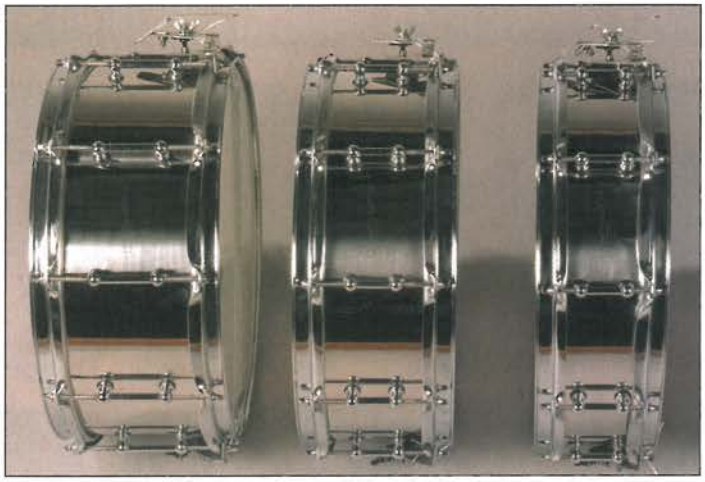
Setting Up

I put the first drum on a standard snare stand, and positioned it how I thought would be correct. Because my right leg is dominant, I assumed that it would be the leg I'd want to use for the Vario Lifter. As it turned out, because of the range of motion necessary to move the Lifter through its various positions, it was impossible to use it while keeping a bass drum beat. I began to wonder what good being able to adjust snare tension was if you couldn't do it while playing a song (presumably containing a bass-drum pattern). I then realized that if I turned the drum around and operated the Vario Lifter with my left (hi-hat) leg, I was able to play the bass drum while simultaneously adjusting the snare tension. I could still use my left foot for opening and closing the hi-hat while operating the Vario Lifter with my knee.

The first challenge in properly playing a snare drum with a Vario Lifter was to set the drum at a height that was comfortable for playing and also allowed me to operate the Lifter with my knee. This wasn't terribly difficult with the 4x14 and 5x14 drums, but did prove problematic with the 6x14. It took a lot of experimentation to find a compromise location. The drum was still a little higher for my hands and a little lower for my knee than I would have liked. But I was able to play the drum and operate the Lifter satisfactorily.

In Use

I played a simple pattern on the drum while moving the Vario Lifter up and down repeatedly. My first impression was that the Lifter didn't really seem to provide much variation of snare tension. It could be moved through its entire range of rotation from bottom to top,



From left:
6x14 Stagemaster,
5x14 Studiomaster,
4x14 Funkmaster

and the snares essentially went from off to on, without much in between. With a little more experimentation, I found that an improved Vario range only came when the resonant head was tightened to above-average tension, and the batter head was loosened to below-average tension. Unfortunately, that combination might not provide a drummer with the proper snare-drum sound for every song, every room being played in, and every overall musical environment.

6x14 Stagemaster

Right out of the box, the 6x14 drum required very little tuning. I increased the tension on the upper head to medium-high, and left the bottom head alone. My first impression of this drum was how incredibly responsive it was. Snare response was excellent from the lightest touch with brushes to a solid backbeat or rimshot. The drum offered a good combination of dryness and a clear crisp tonal character, while also possessing the fat, ringy tone one would expect from a full-size metal drum. Playing in the center of the head yielded a bright, crisp, and slightly ringy sound, while playing around the edges yielded a higher-pitched, louder, and very pronounced overtone. I wouldn't recommend muffling this drum. It was made to sing.

With the batter head tuned to a higher tension, much of that tonal variety between the center of the head and the edges went away. Hitting the center of the drum yielded a high-pitched, crisp sound, and the edges were nearly identical, with only slightly more ring. The snare response was slightly decreased, but still above average.

With the batter head at a low tension, repeated sticking patterns produced a lot of low-end overtones and build-up. This can be either a positive or negative quality, depending on how evenly the head is tensioned overall. It can sound correct if the tension is even, but muddy and dissonant if it is not. When I played a simple pattern or backbeat, nearly all the overtones went away, resulting in a dry, staccato note.

5x14 Studiomaster

With many of the positive qualities of the 6x14 and 4x14 Wahan drums, the 5x14 Studiomaster was definitely the most versatile of our sample lot. It was also the easiest of the three drums to place at a comfortable playing level and still have the Vario Lifter at a comfortable location for my knee.

Tuned high, the 5x14 drum took on many of the qualities of its 4x14 sibling. It was bright, high-pitched, and had moderate overtones. A medium tension produced a slightly more staccato note, similar volume, increased overtones, and a vastly improved snare response.

At low tension, the 5x14 drum provided a round, fat character suitable for jazz, rock, and other playing situations where a big backbeat or thick groove is desired. Brush response at this low tension was superb. However, the best part about the 5x14 drum at this tension was that this was where the Vario Lifter really started to be a lot of fun. A lower tension on the batter head gave a vastly increased range of variability to the Vario Lifter, and I started to get into some really cool grooves and patterns while varying from snares off to on, and just about every combination in between.

4x14 Funkmaster

The Funkmaster took on many of the tonal qualities of a piccolo snare when tuned high. It was bright, crisp, and ringy, with a simply Earth-shattering rimshot. Overall variation from the center of the batter head to the edges was decidedly less pronounced than on the other two drums, but above average nonetheless.

At a medium tension the 4x14 had a very focused sound—still dry and crisp, but with a reduction of overtones. Tuned low, the drum was adequate, and it even took on some of the qualities of the deeper drums. But overall it didn't possess the same refinement that the other two took on at low tension.

Overall Quality

The construction and finish quality of all three of our sample drums was superb. There are many features of each drum that improve their quality and usability. All three have ten lugs and tension rods per head, which provide increased tunability and allow very high and low tensions without making the drum sound choked or muddy. The tension rods are fitted with nylon washers that provide an increased tuning range with a smoother overall motion. Because the Vario Lifter and butt plate mechanism is attached directly to the tension rod/rim assembly, it doesn't require any extra holes in the body of the drum (as traditional throw-offs and butt plates do). This improves the resonance of the drums.

In addition to the Vario snare-tension adjuster, there is a spring-loaded wing nut on the butt-plate side that allows the user to make fine snare-tension adjustments. While the wing nut did the job, I found it a little too small to use comfortably. And, quite frankly, it seemed a little cheap in relation to the overall quality of the drums.

Conclusion

After playing the Wahan drums and getting the hang of the Vario Lifter, I had a lot of fun. Granted, not every drummer would have a need to adjust snare tension on the fly. But if a Wahan snare drum with a Vario Lifter is within your budget range, I suggest you at least check one out. It's a well-designed innovation that can add a very cool weapon to your drum arsenal.

THE NUMBERS

4x14 Stainless Steel Funkmaster $600
5x14 Stainless Steel Studiomaster $625
6x14 Stainless Steel Stagemaster $650
(310) 451-5530, www.wahan.de.

THE MODERN DRUMMER FESTIVAL WEEKEND 2003 DVD

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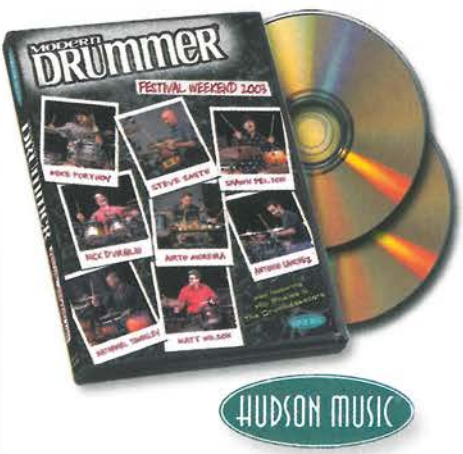

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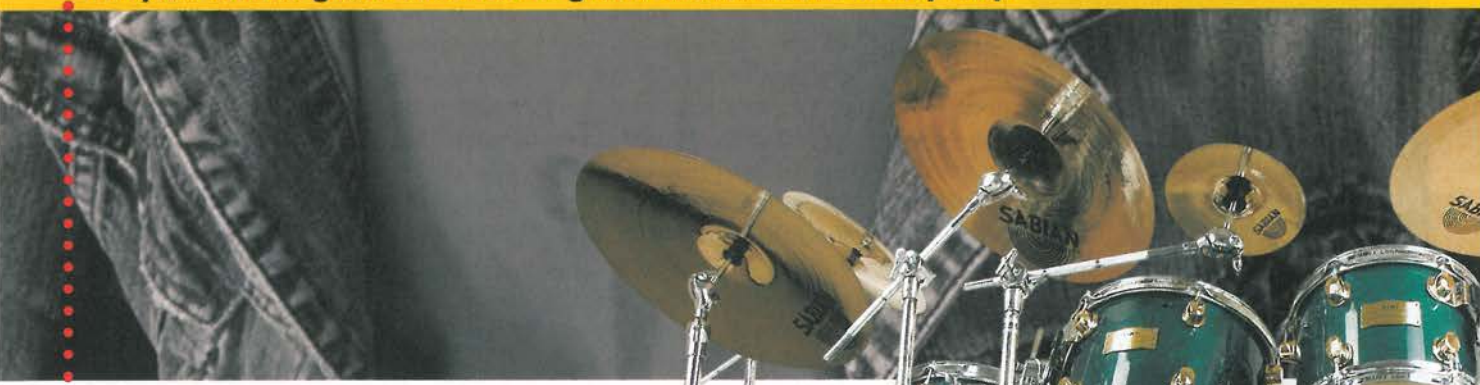

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provides unprecedented sonic control and versatility

outstanding acoustic characteristics

does the work of two microphones in one body

MISSES

5-pin XLR cable may be hard to replace on short notice

by Jim Batcho

The kick drum is often the most complex instrument to dial in on a recording session or live gig. Studio engineers are known to spend hours experimenting with different microphones and mic'-placement techniques in order to capture the sweet sound of the drum. Adding to the challenge is the fact that different mic's accentuate different characteristics. Many times, two or more mic's are used just to get a good sound from a kick. A dynamic mic' will be employed to capture the drum's attack and energy, while a condenser microphone will be used to enhance the warmth and tonality of the drum.

In a perfect world, we'd be able to have it all. Audio-Technica hopes to shape that world with the introduction of the Artist Elite AE2500 microphone, which they modestly advertise as "the ultimate kick-drum mic'." What makes the AE2500 so different is that it's actually two mic's in one—or more specifically, two mic' elements in a single road-worthy casing. A condenser and a dynamic element are both fed through a 5-pin XLR cable that splits into two separate standard 3-pin XLR input connectors. This means you have two discrete input signals to play with from one source. As if that weren't enough, the mic' also has a switchable 10-dB pad (good for hot signals) and a switchable 80-Hz high-pass filter (nice to have, even though you wouldn't want to engage this with a kick drum).

Simply put, what A-T has pulled off here is a major accomplishment, technologically and sonically. First, the designers have managed to house two different elements in one mic' casing in perfect phase, which is no easy feat. Second, the AE2500 offers a live or studio engineer unprecedented control over the shape of a kick drum's sound. Consider the fact that you can mix the input level, EQ, compression, and gating of the condenser and dynamic elements independently for every note struck on the kick drum. That's a lot of flexibility and control toward achieving a perfect sound on a sonically complex instrument. If you want a mic' that you can just throw on the drum and quickly get a sound with, this isn't the one for you. But if you like to experiment, you'll find whatever kick sound you desire with the AE2500. To better understand this concept, let's explore the two different mic' elements in the AE2500.

Table Of The Elements

The dynamic's frequency response begins at about –5 dB at 30 Hz, and builds up to zero dB at around 60 Hz. There's a nice boost at a kick's typical sweet spot of 70 Hz before going flat again at about 200 Hz. It starts rising again around 1.5 kHz and maintains a fairly wide peak from there to around 6 kHz before rolling off dramatically from there. I hoped to see more of the extreme low end established in the dynamic part of the AE2500, but this is where the condenser takes over.

The condenser element is a cardioid pattern, which means that it concentrates most of its focus on a single source while still picking up much of what surrounds it. The frequency response is almost completely flat from a full 20 Hz to 1 kHz, but it does have a tiny bump from 40 to 50 Hz. It also has a more pronounced 3–4 kHz peak, and then a much stronger one at 9 kHz before it attenuates from there. Condenser mic's in general are more sensitive than dynamics, but they're less successful with aggressive sources (such as, oh...a *kick drum*). However, the condenser element is what will reproduce the overall depth and roundness of the drum, which is something lacking in dynamic kick mic's. This is also why the 10-dB pad is a welcome addition to the condenser element, since it will offer better control over high SPL levels.

As noted above, there are significant fre-

Removing the AE2500's grille reveals its twin-element design. The dynamic element is shown here above the smaller condenser element.

quency boosts of varying degrees in both elements at the mid-high range. This may be surprising in a mic' that's supposed to capture the low frequencies produced by a bass drum. But a kick is not just about low end; it's also about the attack and "click" that must come through a busier modern mix—particularly when the kick is fighting for space with the bass guitar. These "click" frequencies exist in that 5–9 kHz upper-mid end of the spectrum, so this is precisely what you want. Although the AE2500's mid-highs are pronounced, this doesn't mean you will get any low-end loss. Quite the opposite. Since the condenser element is nearly flat from a full 20 Hz to 1 kHz—and considering that the extreme low-frequency point of human hearing *begins* at around 20 Hz—you'll have more than enough ultra-low end to play with.

On The Job

Once you put the AE2500 to work, you begin to realize that this mic' is very sensitive to proximity effect. This means that subtle movements of the mic' generate a variance in sound timbre. At an inch or two away from the head, it seemed to work best on-axis (pointing straight at the head). This close miking captured a great deal of head sound, but also got a nice low "doooom." Further back toward the middle of the drum, the mic' liked being a little more off-axis. This works to the condenser element's strength in capturing more of the kick's roominess, while still getting a great deal of attack from the dynamic element. At this point you get more of a punchy, well-rounded thud.

At the hole of the front head, the mic' again seemed to like being on-axis. In that configuration it caught a great deal of low-end spread while still retaining a tasteful attack.

Other Applications

Aside from kick drum, I also used the AE2500 for a session in Nashville on a wonderful drum called a klong yaw. It's a 3'-long drum with enormous depth in the low-end frequencies. When placed at the bottom hole, the mic' captured this drum accurately and beautifully, soaking up the deep 30–60 Hz range with a richness that was immediately evidenced in the mix. It's not easy to capture those frequencies so smoothly, but the AE2500 handled them admirably. In fact, it generated that "Oh yeah" feeling you get during those special moments in a song.

Conclusion

Although I have zero complaints about the AE2500, there are a couple of things to consider before you put down your hard-earned dollar. Notably, the two-element design, with its two separate XLR connectors, means that you need two channels on a console to operate it. Using two inputs just for the kick drum on a cover band's 16-channel board would certainly eat into a sound engineer's precious real estate. This mic' is more applicable to mid-to-large tours or on studio sessions, where the sound console has input channels to spare. Also worth noting is that the 5-pin XLR that is necessary in order for the AE2500 to work is not easy to replace in a pinch.

If microphones were cars, the AE2500 would be one of those spiffy BMW convertibles—astonishingly well-made, aesthetically beautiful, and ready for any occasion. It isn't cheap, but you can get a lot of mileage out of it. The flexibility of sound shaping it provides goes beyond anything else available in the market. As such, the AE2500 may indeed be the ultimate kick drum microphone.

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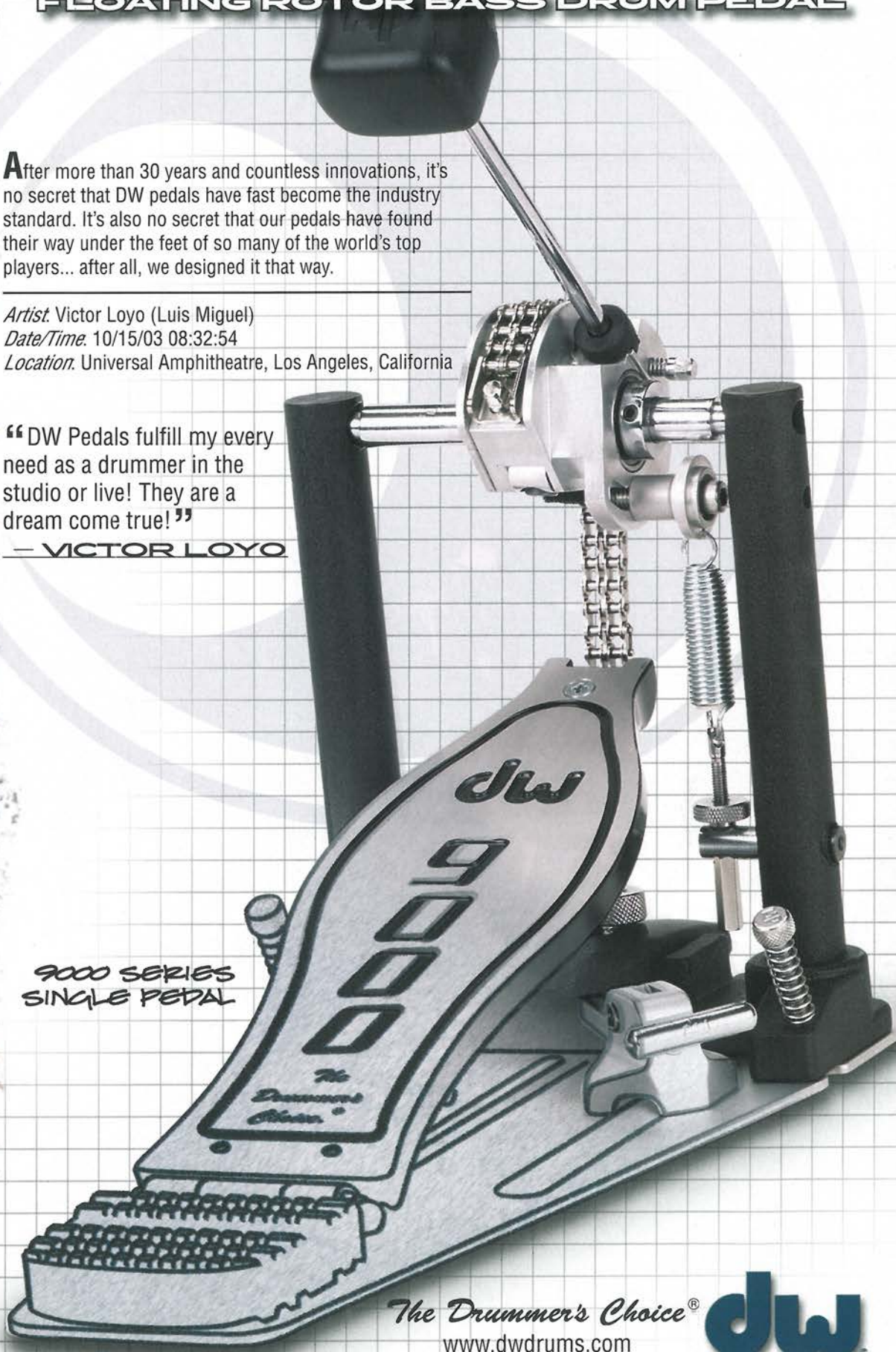

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John Otto

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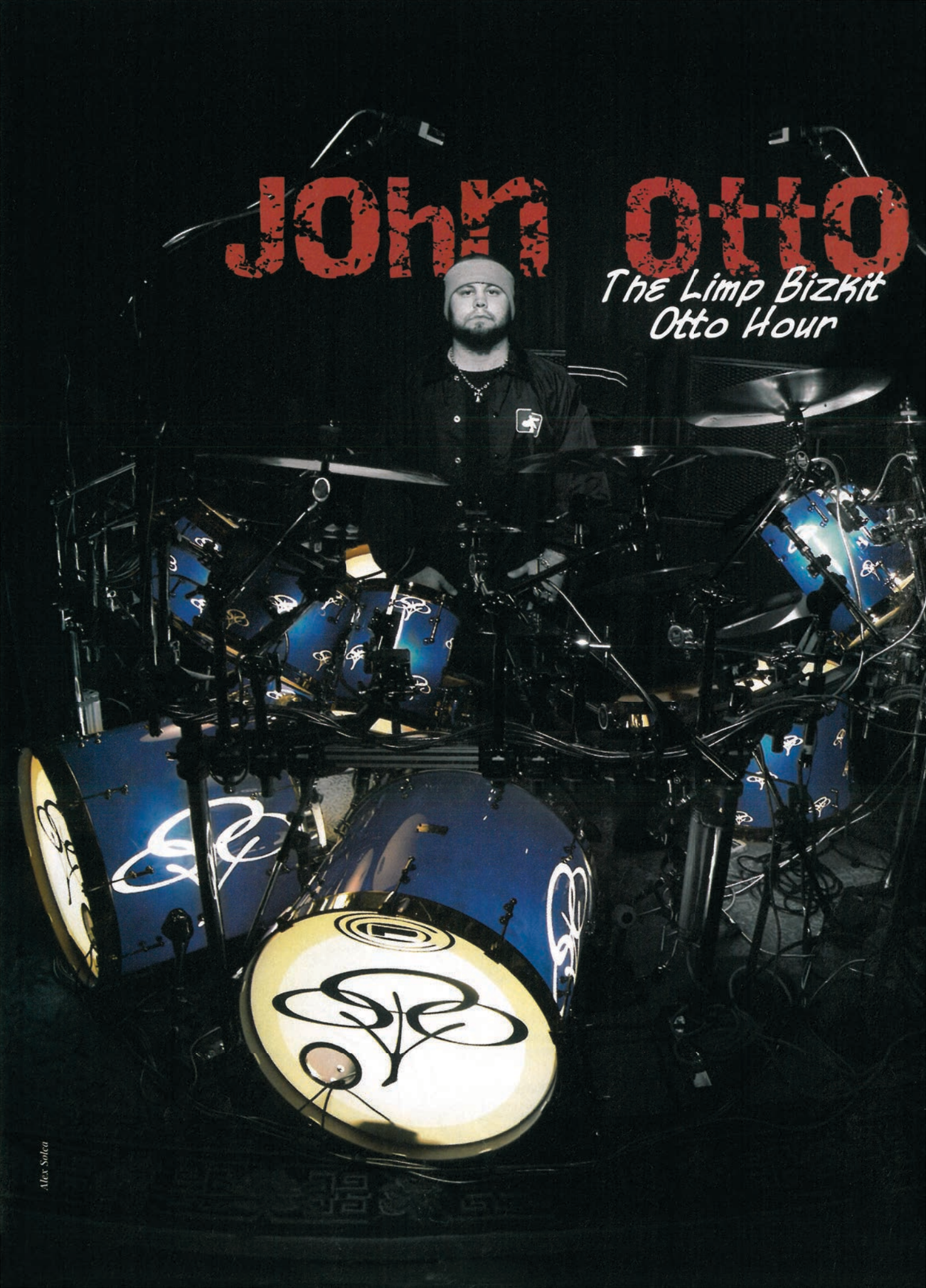


Alex Solca

Four years ago, when John Otto was first featured in *Modern Drummer*, the then twenty-three-year-old spoke with a wisdom and knowledge that belied his age. "When I started listening to jazz, I didn't understand the music," Otto said. "But I thought, 'These guys wouldn't have any problems playing *any* kind of music.' I wanted to be able to do that."

Through hard work and practice, Otto has exceeded his wildest musical dreams, turning himself into a monster drummer. He's incorporated jazz fluency and groove efficiency into a drumming style that is his and his alone. And as a member of Limp Bizkit, a band that creates their chart-topping songs through collective improvisation, Otto has had the chance to stretch his chops and test his mettle. With singer Fred Durst, bassist Sam Rivers, DJ Lethal, and new guitarist Mike Smith, Otto has achieved something rare in these days of soulless pop stars, motorized hip-hop, and Pro Tools machinery.

Typically recorded without a click track, Limp Bizkit's mammoth grooves are as natural as the jungle and often just as ferocious, all thanks to Otto's slippery and smoking 2-and-4 alignment. The band has also been quite resourceful, evolving in ways that pretenders to their throne could never imagine. At the center of their growth is an outlook that admits everything and denies nothing. Rap? Jazz? Metal? Hip-hop? It's all there in the Bizkit brand, and it starts from the ground up with John Otto's inclusive worldview of drumming styles past and present.

by Ken Micallef

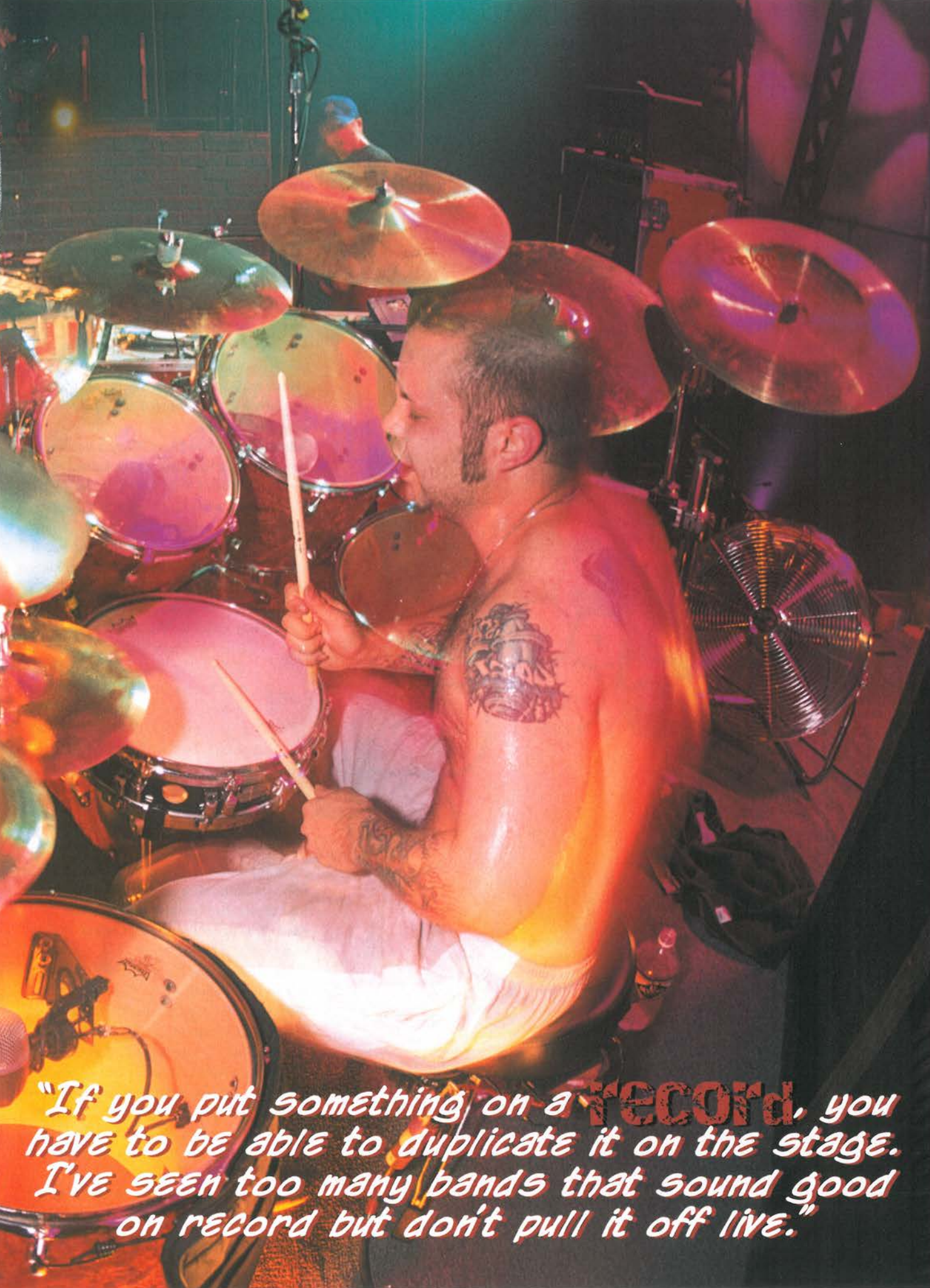
Grounded in metal, jazz, and hip-hop, Otto's fireball rhythms are the grease that makes the Bizkit cook. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, Otto grew up listening to everyone from John Bonham and Lars Ulrich to Elvin Jones and Bill Stewart. Beyond simple lip service to the greats of jazz, Otto has put in serious woodshed time and academic study, starting back at his days at the Anderson School Of The Performing Arts and moving forward to high school drum corps and individual instruction with noted teacher Rick Kirkland. Otto spent time deconstructing Elvin's solos as well as Bonham's sound. And he's studied the mad genius of Vinnie Colaiuta, but also the academic texts of Ted Reed and Kim Plainfield.

More recently, Otto has recorded his own loops CD and mastered the art of playing two bass drums. (Besides the usual way of playing double bass, he's developed a technique of playing two pedals simultaneously with one foot.) Otto has also started his own media company. And he has somehow found the time to record Limp Bizkit's latest release, *Results May Vary*.

On the band's previous hit album, *Chocolate Starfish And The Hot Dog Flavored Water,* Otto put his years of experience and expertise to the test, merging feline hip-hop grooves and furious sticking with the band's freewheeling jams. The drummer popped it low and mean on "Hot Dog," got loose and lumbering on "My Generation," wailed like Bonham on steroids in "Full Nelson," and laid down cannonball grooves on "Livin' It Up," "Take A Look Around," and the caterwauling "Boiler."

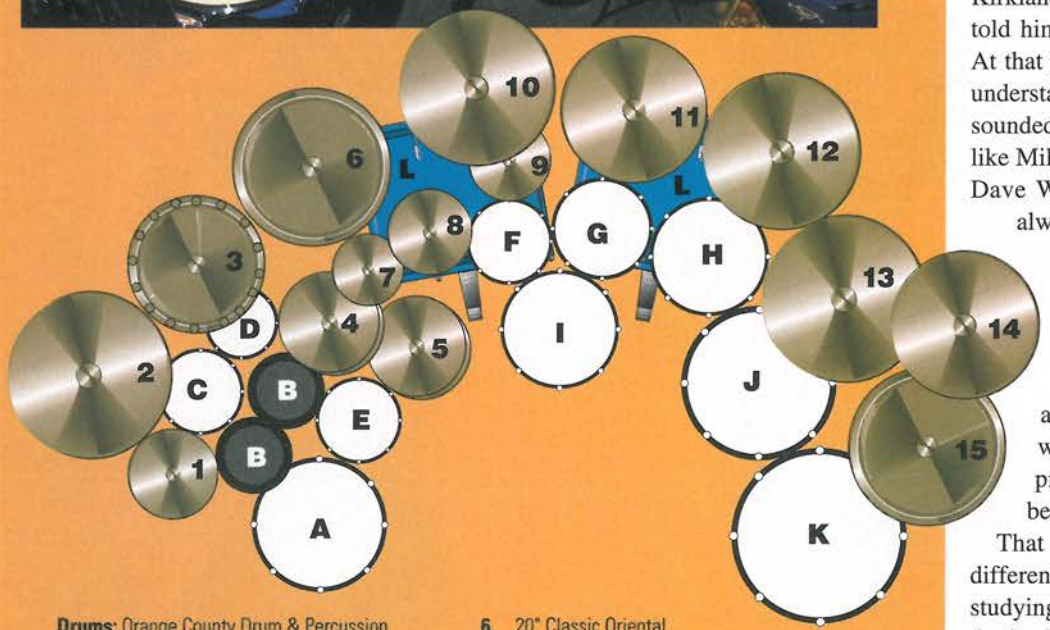
Results May Vary reveals an Otto of a different stripe. The band has changed gears, replacing a guitarist and adding a harder, more menacing approach. *Results* is a dropkick to the groin with hardly a moment to catch your breath. Otto is merciless throughout. From "Eat You Alive" and "Gimme The Mic" to "Creamer," he shows why he's one of the most versatile, creative, fluid, and fiery drummers working today.

Gene Ambo



"If you put something on a record, you have to be able to duplicate it on the stage. I've seen too many bands that sound good on record but don't pull it off live."

Otto's Acrylics



Drums: Orange County Drum & Percussion with acrylic shells in electric blue finish
- **A.** 16x16 floor tom
- **B.** Roland PD-9 pad
- **C.** 6x10 Octoban
- **D.** 6x8 Octoban
- **E.** 6x10 snare
- **F.** 8x10 Octoban
- **G.** 10x12 tom
- **H.** 12x14 tom
- **I.** 6x14 snare (40-ply, vented)
- **J.** 16x18 floor tom
- **K.** 20" gong drum
- **L.** 20x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 10" K Custom Dark splash
2. 20" Oriental Crash Of Doom
3. 16" China Low with rivets
4. 13" Re-Mix hi-hats (mounted)
5. 13" hi-hats (A Custom top, Quick Beat bottom)
6. 20" Classic Oriental
7. 6" A Custom splash
8. 9" Oriental Trash splash
9. 8" A Custom splash
10. 19" A Custom Projection crash
11. 17" A Custom Projection crash
12. 19" K Dark crash
13. 20" K Custom ride
14. 18" Azuka Timbale cymbal
15. 20" Oriental Trash

Hardware: Pearl
Heads: Remo smooth white Emperors on toms and bass drum batters, smooth white Ambassadors on bottoms, coated CS on snare batter
Electronics: Roland TD-10 sound module, KD-7 kick triggers (positioned next to each bass drum pedal)
Sticks: Zildjian John Otto Signature model

MD: Most people don't think of drummers playing metal or hip-hop as being particularly expressive, but you're extremely open, flexible, and fluid. Is that all because of your extensive training?

John: I think it is. It's all those hours in the practice room and a lot of playing experience. After all that time spent on the instrument, you get to a point where you don't have to think about things. Your playing becomes like a language, where you're simply speaking your mind, getting your thoughts out without having to think of the words.

MD: A lot of jazz drummers are into certain rock drummers, but it's not usually the other way around. Most metal guys wouldn't know Elvin Jones from The Muppets' Animal.

John: I listened to Elvin Jones a *lot*. Years ago I studied with this dude named Rick Kirkland. When I went to him for lessons, I told him I wanted to be able to play jazz. At that point I couldn't play it and I didn't understand it, but the music *amazed* me. It sounded cool. I eventually got into albums like Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew*. I was into Dave Weckl for a minute. To this day, I always listen to Vinnie Colaiuta, and, of course, Steve Gadd.

MD: Why did you ultimately pursue rock over jazz?

John: That's what I grew up with. I listened to Metallica, but also Big Daddy Kane. For me, it was always metal and rap. I'm a product of that generation. I make beats.

That said, I was influenced by a lot of different music coming up. When I got into studying drums, I decided to study it all. I don't claim to be a super-jazzer, but I can read charts, and I love to play samba.

MD: You have that fluidity, which makes everything feel good.

John: That's what it's all about to me—it's not so much about licks. I did a clinic for Zildjian in Australia a little while back, and that's what I focused on. I was a little concerned about it, because Vinnie Colaiuta had been booked to do it but then cancelled. So Zildjian asked me to do it. I was thinking, man, how can I do this? I'd never done any kind of clinic before. I am nowhere near the kind of player Vinnie is. But I decided to just go for it.

I started out at that clinic by playing

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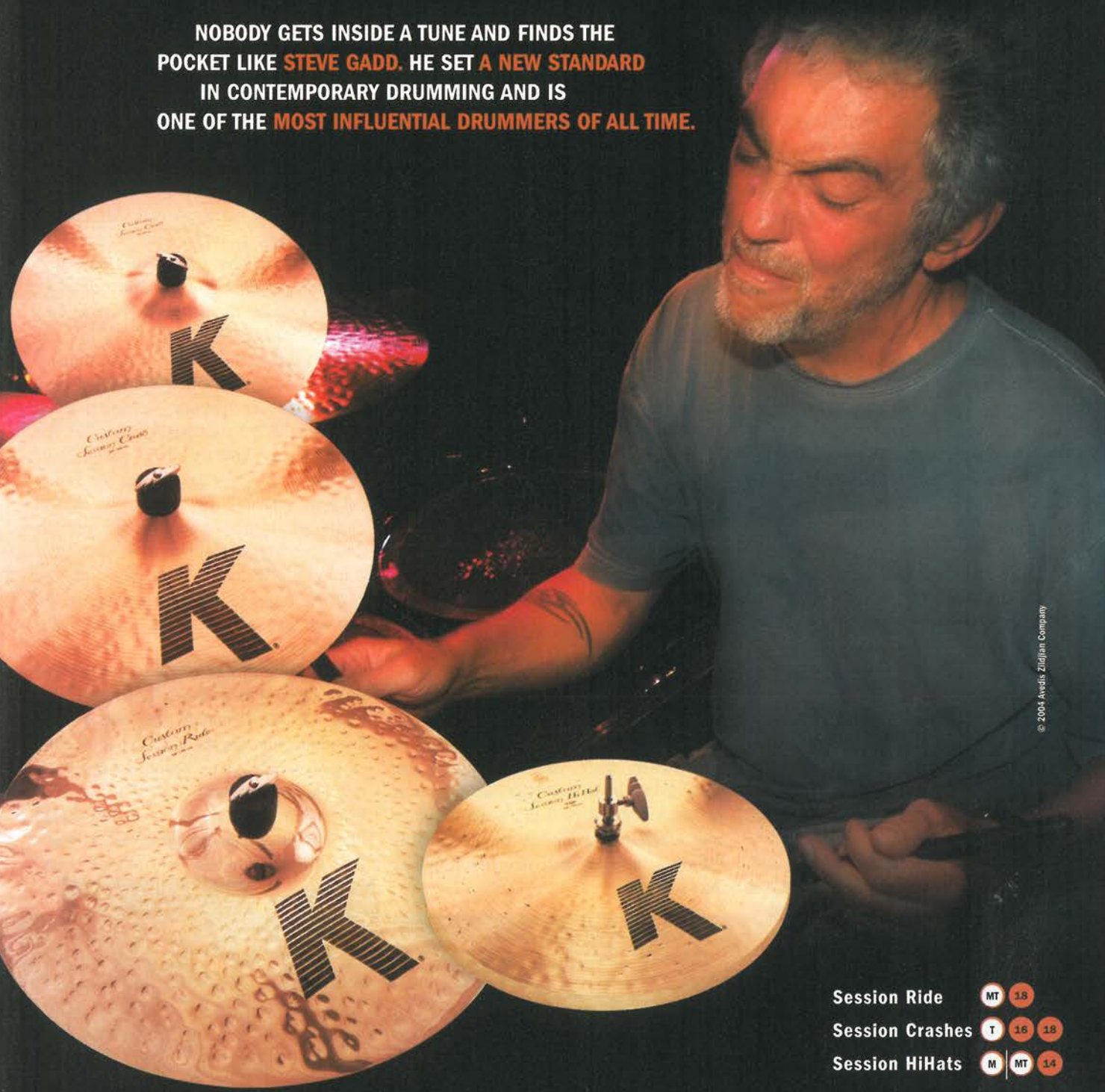

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three minutes of a straight beat without any fills. Then I stopped and said, "This is what you kids coming up have got to do. It's not about how dope your fills are. It's cool to have those tools, but you have to realize what your job is, which is to hold down a beat and make it feel incredible. That's the most important fundamental."

When you're growing up, it's natural to want to do all the fancy stuff. But sometimes that's all you hear. At the same time, when I solo, I go pretty far out.

MD: I kept waiting for you to take some "fours" on *Results May Vary*.

John: If you pick up the Orange County Drums promo DVD that I did, you'll get an idea of where I can go. I laid down a click and then just went for it over the top.

MD: Speaking of chops, you played in marching band in high school. Do you think that helped your drumming?

John: That was great for building chops, especially for the rudiments. I don't practice them as much as I used to, but I really enjoyed working on things like flam taps, Swiss Army triplets, dragadiddles, and windmills. Even though I don't work on that stuff anymore, they're in my drumming *somewhere*.

MD: You attended the Anderson School Of Performing Arts. What was your audition like to get in?

John: I had to read some snare drum pieces, perform drumset etudes, play some xylophone, and know the basic rudiments of percussion. Then I tried out for the jazz band, and since I had been studying quite a bit by that time, I made it into the top jazz band. That was in 1993.

I was really into jazz at that point. I studied Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and a lot of the big band era. Then I moved forward into more modern styles, eventually studying people like Elvin Jones. I really like John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* record. Coltrane is my favorite saxophonist, but I also like Joe Lovano. And I still use traditional grip when I play jazz, although you won't catch me using traditional on Bizkit stuff. But I still practice it.

MD: You sound like you must be a natural talent and a quick study. But were there things about the drums that were hard for you to grasp?

John: Hell yeah—a lot of things. But my private instruction with Rick Kirkland is what pushed me to grab the bull by the horns. It's about learning different techniques and developing your independence. Kim Plainfield has a great book called *Advanced Concepts*. You didn't think I knew that, did ya? [laughs] Kim is a badass. I studied out of that book, and it was like busting a gut. It was really hard. That's why some people think studying is for geeks. It takes discipline.

MD: What else was hard for you?

John: Sambas were tough for me to develop and solo over. It's very hard to develop that independence. I worked a lot out of Ted Reed's *Syncopation*, playing sambas with my feet and right hand while playing the figures in the book with my left hand.

Most of my drum lessons were, "Let's get on the drumkit and battle." After getting my ass kicked for so many years by my teacher...dude, you start learning that stuff. I'd go home and start chopping it up on the set. But Rick was a great drummer and teacher. He used to play with Ray Charles, and he still teaches down in Jacksonville.

MD: In 1995, when you first started jamming with what would become Limp Bizkit, did it feel somehow special?

John: Oh yeah. I knew that we would be signed within a couple years, and we were. It was a good situation. Everyone was open to ideas right away. We messed around with covers, but we were all about doing our own music. We wrote a bunch of songs together. And to this day, all of the music is written by the group. We normally jam and come up with different riffs. Then Fred comes up with the vocal melodies that go over the top.

MD: If I had heard this band before it became successful, I would have thought, "These guys are too far out to succeed. Is it metal? Hip-hop? Neo-prog?"

John: I don't know why people connect with us. As far as a frontman for a rock band, I don't see anybody putting it down like Fred. He's not a trained singer, but it's never too late, bro. He's been studying for the last couple of years. If you put something on a record, you have to be able to duplicate it on the stage. I've seen too many bands that sound good on record but don't pull it off live.

MD: Getting back to your playing, would you say that some things have come naturally to you?

John: *Some* things come naturally, but some I've had to work on, for sure. Playing time with a metronome was hard at first. Dynamics too. On the other hand, playing grooves is like second nature to me—feeling phrases as well. They're just like melodies running in my head. But things like soloing and independence are an ongoing battle. Working on that stuff will never

Bizkits & Gravy

Recordings

Artist	Album
Limp Bizkit	Three Dollar Bill Y'All
Limp Bizkit	Significant Other
Limp Bizkit	Chocolate Starfish And The Hotdog Flavored Water
Limp Bizkit	New Old Songs
Limp Bizkit	Results May Vary

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
John Coltrane	Africa/Brass	Elvin Jones
Metallica	...And Justice For All	Lars Ulrich
Pat Metheny/John Scofield	I Can See Your House From Here	Bill Stewart
Joshua Redman	Spirit Of The Moment: Live At The Village Vanguard	Brian Blade
Branford Marsalis	Crazy People Music	Jeff "Tain" Watts
The Jazz Messengers	The Big Beat	Art Blakey
Tribal Tech	Illicit	Kirk Covington
Orange 9mm	Tragic	Matthew Cross
Tool	Aenima	Danny Carey

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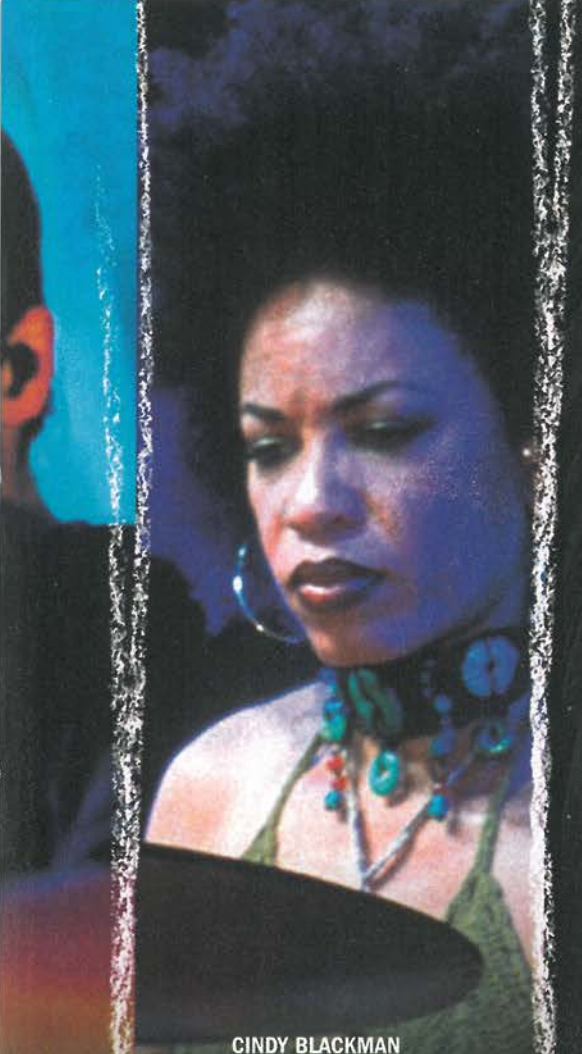

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MD: Was there a moment after all the practicing and training that you had a drumming epiphany, a breakthrough?

John: That came a few years back, when I was playing in an all-improvisational band. We had worked out some heads to songs, but the middle sections were totally improvised. We always played out. That can get annoying for some people, but we were learning how to feed off of each other in much the same way that Elvin and Coltrane did. At least that was the kind of vibe we were going for. That really opened my mind for drumming and put everything into the proper context.

MD: Do you recommend that drummers try to find that kind of open-ended situation?

John: Absolutely. The best way to improve is to jam, jam, jam. Get some people you like to play with and just do it. And don't only play one style of music.

MD: I understand that Bizkit doesn't use a click live or in recording sessions.

John: I used a click on "Build A Bridge" and "Down Another Day" on *Results*. But we don't normally use one, because of the way our songs are structured. A click is a great practice tool, but there's a certain level of natural pushing and pulling of the beat that I feel makes the music swing better.

MD: Your drumming is straighter on *Results May Vary* than on *Chocolate Starfish*. Is it a return or a change of direction?

John: It's a little bit of a change. I really focused on playing what was appropriate for the songs. I had a great time recording

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this album, but it was like doing *three* albums, because we recorded so much music. Not all of it was heavy. There were different songs and styles. Once everything was recorded, we tried to pick the songs that had continuity for the album.

MD: When you have access to any sound or piece of equipment, how do you rein yourself in?

John: You have to know what kind of sound you want to create. There are different sounds I tried to achieve. I tried to take a couple of songs back to the John Bonham sound, that non-safe radio sound.

MD: As far as the drum sounds, some tracks have a big room sound, others sound close-miked.

John: It's all about doing what's needed to serve the song. I watched Led Zeppelin's *The Song Remains The Same* one night, and I told the guys I wanted to get that sound. Back in the day, they used a lot of open room miking. That was the technology they had. Then it all went to close-miking, which is the radio sound. It's safe. I tried to integrate the two. I close-miked the drums and also spread mic's out all around the room. We also used some vintage mic's, like Telefunkens and Neumanns. You can clearly hear the Bonham sound toward the end of the record on the tune "Creamer." There was a lot of messing around happening, too, like recording different songs with different drums.

MD: Why did you add a second bass drum?

John: I wanted to get back to double bass. I never used it on our previous records, but there are spots on *Results* where it really worked. In the middle of "Gimme The Mic," a double bass drum part comes in that mirrors what the whole band is playing.

MD: I like your use of different hi-hat sounds.

John: When we first break into that section, I'm playing closed hi-hat. Then four bars later it breaks into the open hi-hat with the tambourine jingles [Zildjian Re-Mix]. It cut through that section while the band was all blazing and I was playing the double bass part. I like those hi-hats. I also use them in fills.

MD: Limp Bizkit plays loud onstage. What are the challenges for you in that setting?

John: It's a challenge to be able to hear

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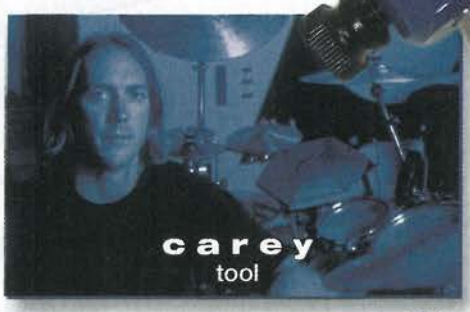

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everything clearly. I don't like in-ear monitors, because it feels like you're playing along to a CD. I prefer speaker monitors, but I think I need to experiment more with the in-ears. I have four sub-woofers, so I can have a wall of sound if I want it. But I'll probably be deaf soon if I'm not careful. I also use a "thumper" under my seat [low-frequency vibration device] so I can feel the bass drums and toms.

MD: Your new drums look impressive.

John: I really like the acrylic shells. They're much better than wood for toms. They really project, which surprised me. I won't play anything else now.

MD: Let's talk about some specific tracks on *Results*. On "Eat You Alive," the parts go from flaming rock to a ska groove and then to a more free-funk style.

John: Yeah, I play a kind of space dub there. Then at the end you hear the toms and the double bass kicking in. I use the double bass sparingly, because I'm not in a speed metal band. But I do use them. They're not just for looks. I also use the double bass on the last chorus of "Phenomenon."

MD: On the other end of the spectrum, I heard you played with the palms of your hands on "Down Another Day."

John: Right. It's a mellow tune, and it just felt good to play with my hands. I hit the drums with my palms and fingers, very similar to how you'd play bongos.

MD: Is "Red Light—Green Light" a drum loop?

John: Yes. I created that on an Akai MPC. It has a few dropouts, but it's mostly the same all the way through. To make the program not feel so drum machine-ish, I turn off the "timing correct" function for everything but the backbeat. We used it on that tune because it's a traditional hip-hop track. Live drums weren't called for. Lethal put together all the music for that.

MD: How do Lethal's loops affect you in concert?

John: We do a lot of trading. For instance, in a tune like "Phenomenon," you hear the beat come in, which are Lethal's programmed drums, and then I work around that beat. We do the same thing on "Nooky." The verses are him, the breakdown in the verse is me playing rimshots, and then we go back and forth.

As I mentioned earlier, we don't play to clicks live, so anything can happen, unlike some of these bands that play live to a click and use Pro Tools. Some of them sound like The Backstreet Boys trying to do Bizkit. They're slaves to the technology because everything is programmed. To me, that's too perfect and boring.

MD: The beginning beat of "Let Me Down" sounds like the old Steve Miller song, "Take The Money And Run."

John: Steve Miller's drummer, Gary Mallaber, was great on that original track. I also went for a Bonham vibe on the tune, but in my own way.

MD: What are some of your upcoming projects beyond Limp Bizkit?

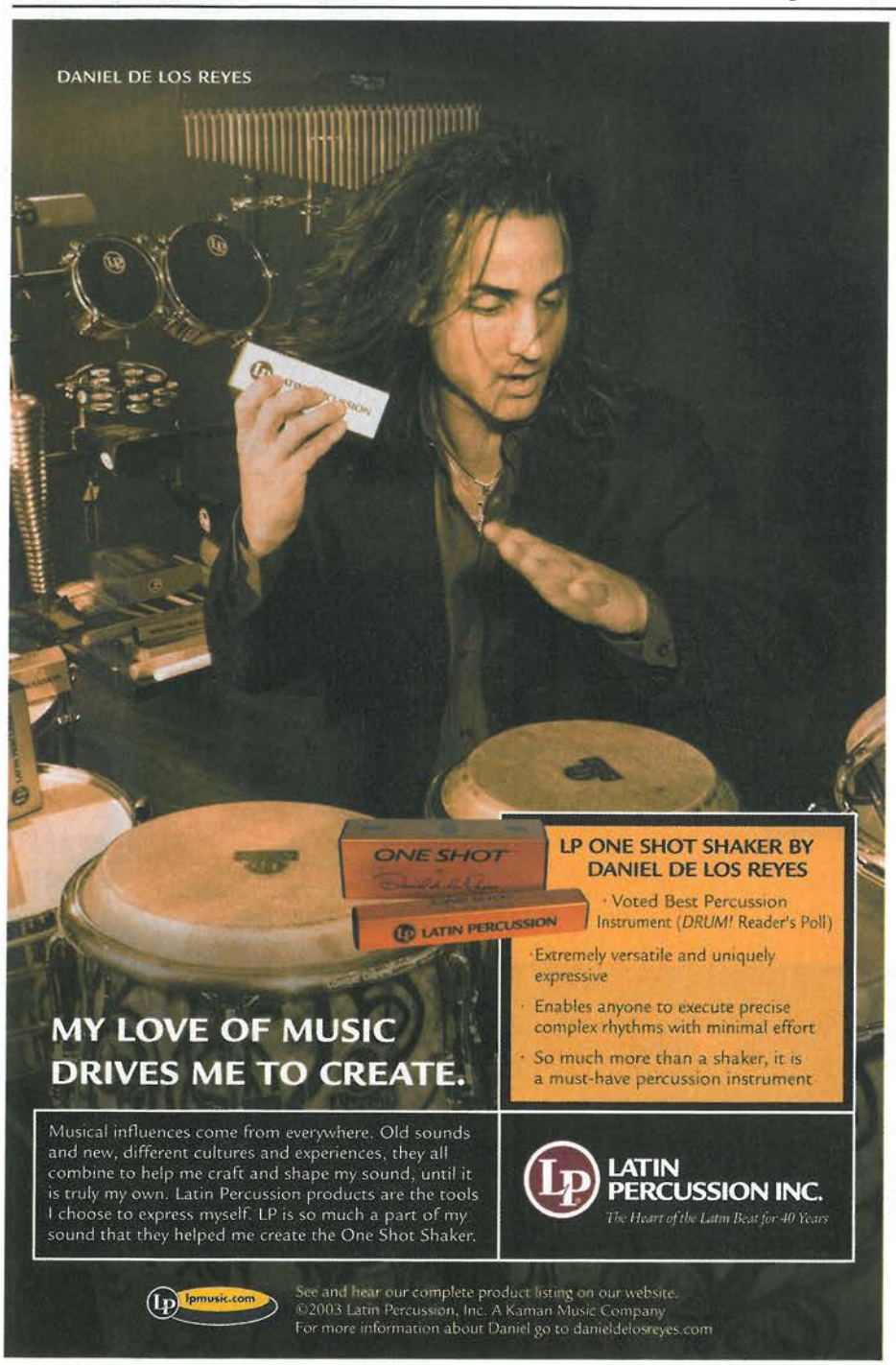
John: I just started an entertainment company called Mastermind. My partner and I are going to sign some street hip-hop. We're looking for rock bands too.

MD: When are you going to make the John Otto solo record?

John: I haven't really thought about it.

MD: From what you've been saying, it sounds like you have all sorts of MPC beats and song ideas.

John: I could do that, but I'd also want to include a lot of drum stuff. Hmmmm, maybe that's something I should start thinking about. Yeah, I *gotta* do that.



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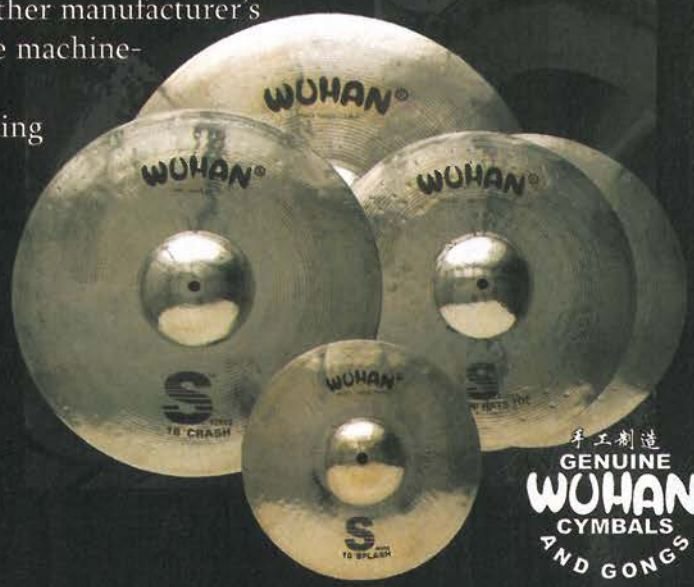

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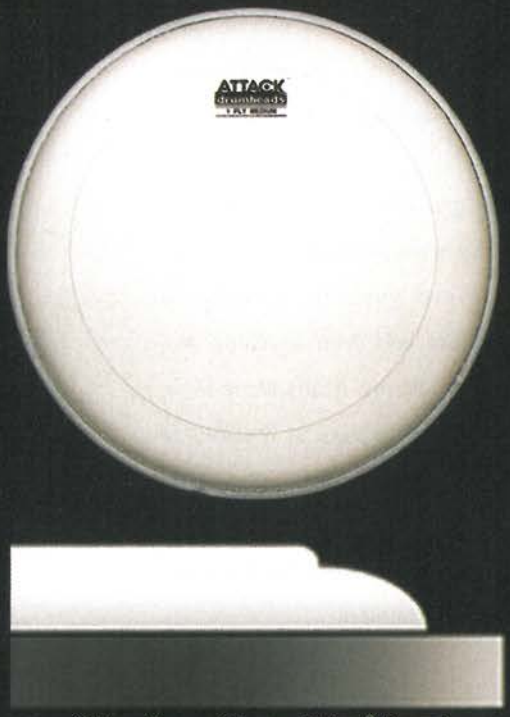

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A Tribute To

Ron Spagnardi

Drummer And Dreamer

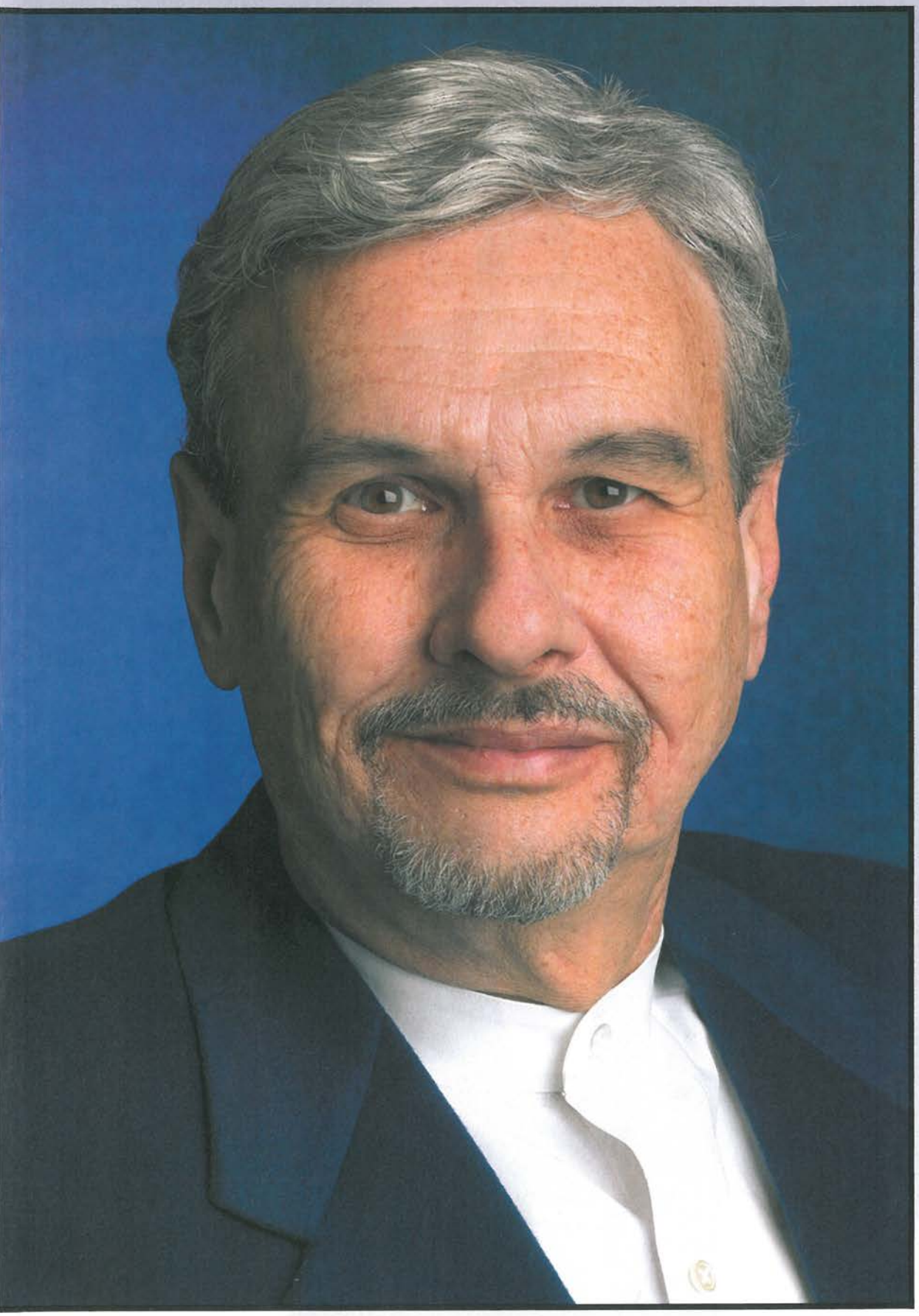
It's impossible to describe Ron Spagnardi and *not* use the word "visionary." Of course, Ron himself would deny it, because he was a modest man not given to personal horn-blowing. But in the hundreds of condolence messages that we received from around the world following Ron's passing this past September 22, "visionary" was the one adjective used over and over again. And after all, what else would you call a man who saw a need that no one had seen before—and then had the courage and conviction necessary to turn that need into a reality?

The irony is, the founder, editor, and publisher of the world's most widely read drumming magazine never set out to be any of those things.

He started out to be a drummer.

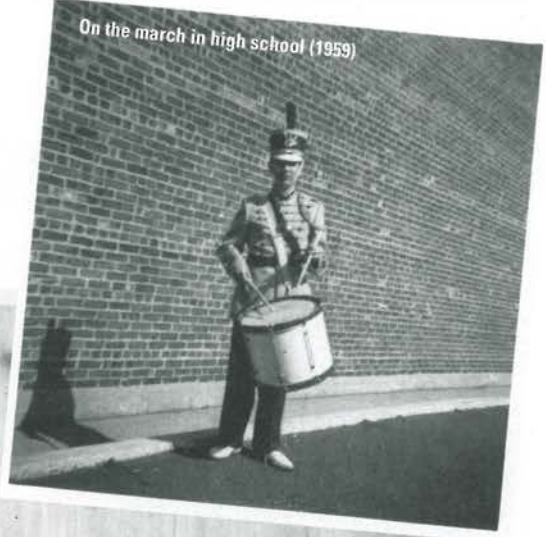
Ron started playing at the age of eight. He was following in the footsteps of his father, Leo Spagnardi, who had been a jazz and big band drummer in the 1940s and '50s. As a teenager, Ron played dance gigs and clubs throughout the New York/New Jersey area. In the early '60s he enrolled at the prestigious Berklee College Of Music in Boston.

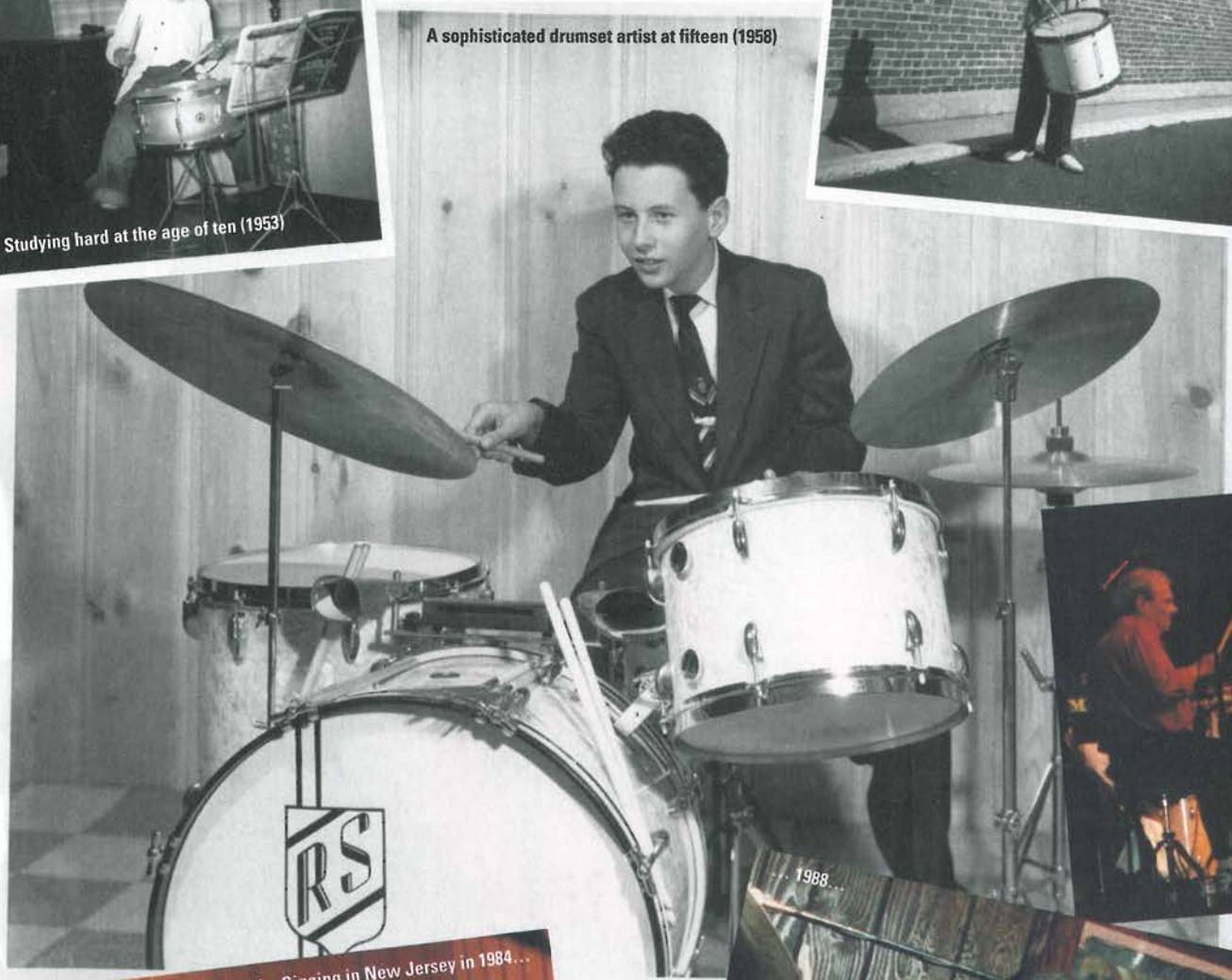
After graduating from Berklee in 1963, he earned his living for the next several years by operating a music store and drum-teaching studio in New Jersey. At the same time, he continued to play at the Village Vanguard, the Five Spot, and other notable New York clubs with jazz artists such as guitarist Joe Beck and vibist Mike Mainieri.

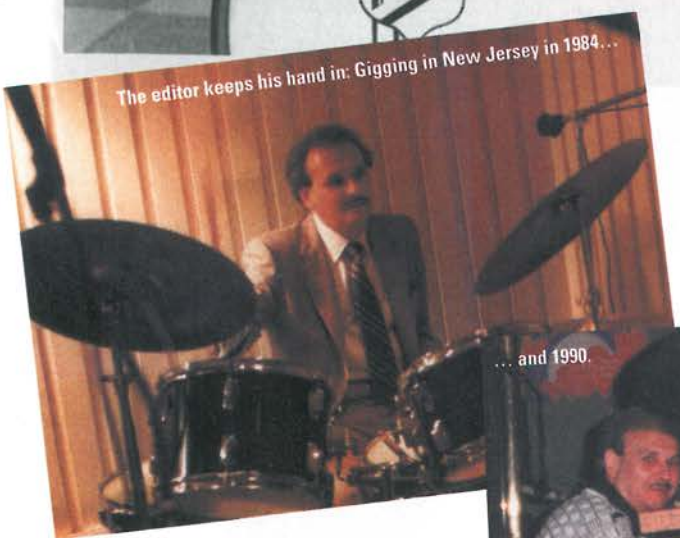


Ron The Drummer

Studying hard at the age of ten (1953)


On the march in high school (1959)


A sophisticated drumset artist at fifteen (1958)

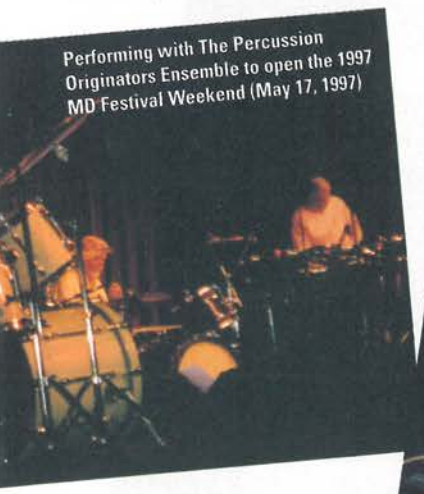

The editor keeps his hand in: Gigging in New Jersey in 1984...

... 1988...

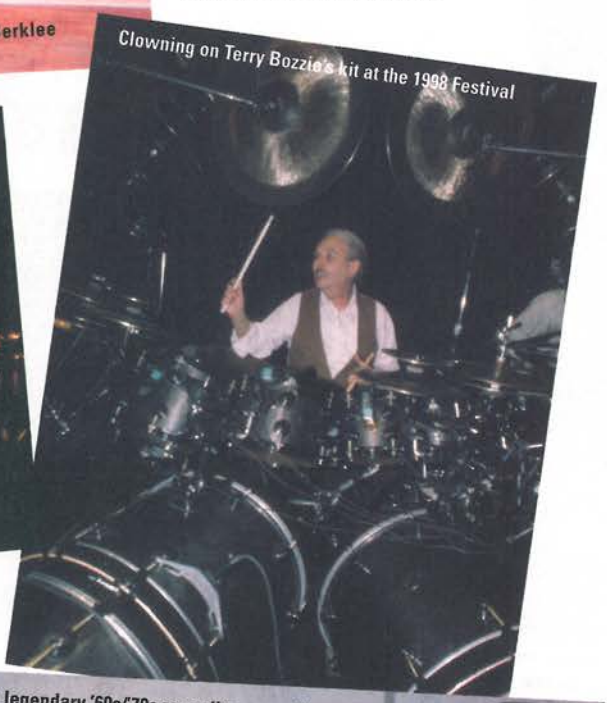
... and 1990.

The hip professional: Fresh out of Berklee and onto the club circuit (1964)

In the mid-1970s, Ron's never-ending personal quest for drumming information led him to a realization: While several music-related magazines existed at that time, none was specifically dedicated to the needs and interests of drummers. Ron was convinced that drummers would appreciate—and buy—an informative and entertaining publication all their own. In 1977 he put his family's savings on the line to create that publication, which he named *Modern Drummer*.



Performing with The Percussion Originators Ensemble to open the 1997 MD Festival Weekend (May 17, 1997)



Clowning on Terry Bozzio's kit at the 1998 Festival

Sitting in with legendary '60s/'70s recording group The Dupree's at his own 60th birthday party (April 26, 2003)

The first editions of the fledgling publication were created on a ping-pong table in the basement of the Spagnardis' Nutley, New Jersey home. The magazine's staff initially consisted of Ron, his wife, Isabel, his father, Leo, and his eight-year-old daughter, Lori. Ron wrote virtually all of the articles in the first issue, using a variety of pen names. The fate of the second issue depended on how well the first one sold. From such humble beginnings, Ron's brainchild has since become the most widely read drum publication in the world.

Over the ensuing twenty-seven years, *Modern Drummer*'s headquarters moved from the Spagnardis' basement to an office building in Clifton, New Jersey, and from there to two successive locations in the nearby town of Cedar Grove. Along the way, Ron expanded MD Publications to include books by such well-known drummers as Joe Morello, Gary Chester, Bill Bruford, Carl Palmer, and Billy Ward. Ever the teacher, Ron also authored over a dozen books himself.

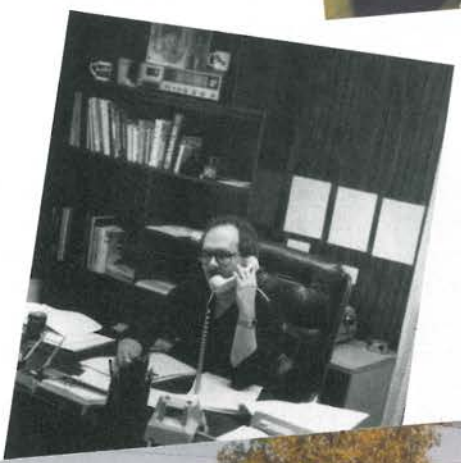
In 1993 Ron created *Drum Business*, a magazine dedicated specifically to the needs of drum retailers. And, of course, he was also the producer of the legendary *MD* Festival Weekends, annual events that brought drummers from around the world to perform and mingle at Montclair State University.

Over his twenty-seven years at the helm of *MD*, Ron grew in stature as a figure in music journalism. Fortunately for all of us, he never stopped being a drummer. And as a drummer, he believed firmly that his first priority—and that of *Modern Drummer*—was to "promote the dream of drumming" to readers around the world. That belief informed and inspired every aspect of what he brought to the magazine, and through it to the worldwide drumming community. His loss is deeply felt among that community, but his legacy will live on in these pages.

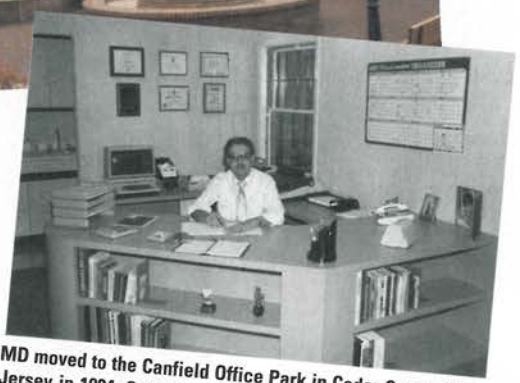
Ron The Editor

Ron Spagnardi's personal history is inseparably linked to that of Modern Drummer. As his daughter Lori puts it, "MD was the sibling I never had. And sometimes I wondered which one of us came first!"

MD's headquarters from 1977 to 1979 was the Spagnardi home in Nutley, New Jersey. Ron's desk was in the basement, and the magazine was laid out on a ping-pong table.



In 1979 the magazine opened its first real office, on the second floor of 1000 Clifton Avenue, in Clifton, New Jersey. By that time Ron had taken on a more "executive" look.



MD moved to the Canfield Office Park in Cedar Grove, New Jersey in 1984. Over the next ten years, Ron presided over the launch of the MD Festival Weekend, Drum Business magazine, and several successful drum books, while the magazine itself grew ever larger.

Ron and his wife Isabel designed and supervised the construction of Modern Drummer's current headquarters in Cedar Grove, which opened in 1994. From his office in that building, Ron continued to guide MD's efforts to provide drummers with the most educational, entertaining, and enjoyable magazine possible.

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Remembering Our Founder

Drumming Greats On Ron Spagnardi

I am so sorry to hear of the death of Ron—it came suddenly to those of us unaware of his illness. He has certainly left a remarkable legacy in the shape of the magazine, which has done so much to encourage me and countless others in our drumming lives. And Ron leaves us in good hands, as I'm sure the *MD* staff will continue to maintain the high standard that he set from the beginning.

Bill Bruford
(Yes, King Crimson, Earthworks)

I join all of the other drummers in the world in mourning the loss of Ron Spagnardi. His work, enthusiasm, and commitment to all things drumming touched and enriched all of our lives. I know that these are tough days, but I am confident and grateful that the *MD* team will continue to honor his vision and legacy. I send you all my heartfelt condolences.

Peter Erskine
(Weather Report, Elvis Costello, jazz great)

Ron Spagnardi was a true visionary, and, in a large way, the ringleader that helped instigate the drum community that we have today. His creation, *Modern Drummer* magazine, was the focal point that the drum community needed in order to formalize the tendency most drummers have to freely share their love of drumming with each other. Ron had a very classy approach to presenting the drummers of every generation, and he was keenly tuned into the fact that the drummers of today are standing on the shoulders of our forefathers. This is one of the facets that I like the most about *MD*, and it was obviously a reflection of Ron's philosophy.

Whenever I hung with Ron at the numerous *MD* Festivals that I attended and performed at, he was a true gentleman—warm and enthusiastic, and truly excited about all the drummers who were there, both onstage and backstage. Ron's support of my drumming career has been very important to me, both on a personal level and a professional level. Personally, because I respected him and his views, it pleased me that he respected me and my drumming approach. Professionally, because of the influence and power of *Modern Drummer* to inform the public and shape an image. Because he publicized what I was doing in the music world, it helped my career as a professional drummer in a large way.

I was shocked and saddened by Ron's passing, as I didn't know he was suffering from cancer. I miss Ron and know he is hangin' with some of the cats he dearly loved—Buddy, Gene, Papa Jo, and Armand. We will long be influenced by the legacy of Ron Spagnardi. Let us keep his name and vision alive.

Steve Smith
(Journey, Vital Information)

Ron Spagnardi started the first drum magazine, which, to me, is a major feat. He not only brought the drumming community together, he brought drums to the magazine stand. And not just to the magagzine stand, but to the American and international psyche, putting drumming in a place of stature. *MD* gave drumming credibility and legitimized it in a way that hadn't been done before. Ron really broke new ground, and when I heard about the risks he took, using the family savings to realize his dream, I really have to give a BRAVO in capital letters to him.

Ron always made me feel at home at the Festivals and such. Maybe it's my Italian blood, but he always made me feel like a goombah! When I talked to him on the phone, Ron just had a way of making me feel like I was an old friend. We need more people like that in the world. He had a successful business and remained personable, so it can be done. I applaud him for that.

Vinnie Colaiuta
(Frank Zappa, Sting, Faith Hill)

I had the honor of meeting Ron a couple of times. He made *MD* what it is today—the greatest drum magazine in the world. We drummers would be lost without it. We lost one of the greatest guys on the planet who put out one of the greatest books for guys like me. I had the honor to grace two covers of *MD*, and I'm an avid reader—I read every issue that comes out!

No doubt, Ron will be missed by me, the drum industry, and all of the drummers of the world. But I do I know he's in a great place, and I hope to see him when I get there. God bless him.

Peter Criss
(KISS)

By virtue of losing Ron, we lost the editor of probably the greatest rock 'n' roll drum magazine there is, and it's a great loss to all of us, especially drummers. I've read *Modern Drummer* ever since it started, and I still read every issue.

Joey Kramer
(Aerosmith)

I've known Ron Spagnardi since the inception of *Modern Drummer*. I think he was a real visionary in his field, and I was happy to be involved with him at an early date. I found Ron to be a very sincere and honest person. And years ago, when he took some lessons with me, I found him to be a *very* good drummer. I thought he was also a talented writer. He produced some very meaningful books, particularly *The Big Band Drummer*, which he wrote three years ago. In fact, I still use it a great deal. That's a marvelous book—among his many others.

Ed Shaughnessy
(Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*, Doc Severinsen)

Words cannot describe all my feelings for Ron. I knew him well enough to know that he had the strength and passion to fight as long or longer than most people would. I wish I could have said goodbye and praised him for having created the most amazing drum magazine in the world. I send all my love and thoughts to his family and everyone at *Modern Drummer*.

Kenny Aronoff
(John Mellencamp, Smashing Pumpkins, Michelle Branch)

Ron was a great friend. I can remember vividly the first *Modern Drummer* Festival I played. I had my dad with me, and Ron and his wife, Isabel, knew we were big Detroit Lions fans and that there was a game on that we were missing. Ron went home and brought a TV into my dressing room so my dad could watch the Lions game. He sat in

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Ron Spagnardi Tribute

there, hung out with us, and was just so amazing. He made us feel great.

Drummers all over the world read *Modern Drummer*. I was just in Russia doing a drum clinic in Moscow, and this kid came up to me with a copy of *MD*! The magazine has brought drummers together all over the world, and that was Ron Spagnardi's vision. He was a great man, a great friend, and a great drummer too. I'm very sad for his passing, but the world is a better place because he was in it.

Gregg Bissonette
(David Lee Roth, LA session great)

I am so sorry to hear of Ron's passing. Please give my condolences to his family and friends. You have such a wonderful magazine, and I hope you will all continue to make it the best drumming magazine out there.

Simon Phillips
(The Who, Toto)

I was sad to hear the news about Ron. I send my sincere condolences to all his family, friends, and colleagues. I am sure you will all do his spirit justice with the magazine, as always.

Jack DeJohnette
(Miles Davis, jazz legend)

I hope that Ron Spagnardi's original vision for *Modern Drummer* will remain intact. *MD* is a very valuable tool for the drumming community, and Ron wanted to reach everybody, the youngsters as well as the masters. And nothing was ever left out; Ron included all kinds of music.

The little bit of contact I had with Ron was on the phone, and we had some great conversations. He was really fun to talk to because he went back a long way and he knew a lot. We shared a lot of common interests.

Jim Keltner
(George Harrison, Neil Young, studio legend)

I'm brokenhearted over the loss of Ron. He was like my uncle. I loved him very much. I also thank God for Ron, because without him drummers would not have a magazine like *Modern Drummer* to read for advice and knowledge about our craft.

John Blackwell
(Prince)

I'm very so sorry to hear of Ron's passing. He was the best friend a drummer—and our industry—could have.

John Riley
(Vanguard Orchestra, jazz educator)

Ron was such a great guy and so supportive of me in particular. Please give my love and condolences to Isabel and everyone else, in the organization. Again, my love and support to all.

Danny Gottlieb
(Pat Metheny Group, Blues Brothers)

I'm so sorry to hear of Ron's passing. Please give my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to all at *MD*, and especially to his family.

Terry Bozzio
(Frank Zappa, solo artist)

I was very saddened to learn of Ron's passing. It certainly is true that he did a great deal to heighten the awareness and appreciation of drumming. I also think that Ron must have felt very proud of what he accomplished, like a musician who leaves behind a bunch of great recordings. He will be remembered for creating a forum that had never existed before—and one that will last.

Robby Ameen
(Eddie Palmieri, Ruben Blades, Jack Bruce)

I wish to extend my deepest sympathy and condolences to Isabel and Lori Spagnardi, the staff of *Modern Drummer*, and all friends and extended family for the loss of Ron Spagnardi. I would also like to express my gratitude for the countless hours of joy and inspiration that Ron brought to me personally via his wonderful creation, *Modern Drummer* magazine.

Several years ago I approached Ron about doing an in-depth story on him. I thought it would be fascinating to talk with him about his vision and how he achieved the American dream. Though flattered, Ron expressed that he would be wasting pages of the magazine that could be dedicated to other drummers. In a world where every business mogul is so ready to toot their horn and have a book written about them, Ron was truly a man of humility.

Zoro
(Lenny Kravitz, Bobby Brown)

I remember when I was about thirteen years old, sitting in a jazz club with my dad (jazz great Sonny Igoe) and Ron watching Joe Morello play. We just hung out, and Ron talked to me like I was a person, not some little kid who didn't know anything (which is, of course, what I was). That night Ron and my dad were talking about his new project at the time, *Modern Drummer* magazine. He was asking my father what he felt should be included in the magazine and who should be featured. I felt impossibly cool, just being near these guys and sitting at a bar!

At the end of the night, Ron pulled me off to the side and said, "Your dad was telling me about you. He thinks you're the real thing." What that meant to me, the fact that Ron would take the time to do that for an awkward, gangly thirteen-year-old boy when he could have so easily blown me off, was something I'll never forget.

Ron was a class act from top to bottom, and his magazine will forever be a tribute to his vision, kindness, and integrity.

Tommy Igoe
(Broadway's *The Lion King*)

Very sorry to hear the sad news about Ron. I knew he wasn't well for quite some time, but he was a trooper through it all. My thoughts go out to Ron's family.

Jeff Hamilton
(Diana Krall, Clayton/Hamilton Orchestra)

I mourn the passing of Ron Spagnardi, who I feel made a huge contribution to the drumming community. His support and love will be deeply missed. From the deepest part of my heart, I send condolences to Isabel and Lori Spagnardi and the staff of *Modern Drummer*.

Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez
(Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Michel Camilo, Jack Bruce)

I just found out about Ron's passing, but I wanted to extend my condolences to his family and the entire *MD* staff. I feel very lucky to have been able to meet him and share important moments with him.

Antonio Sanchez
(Pat Metheny Band, *MD* Festival 2003 Performer)

I am so sorry about Ron. He was a good man and a visionary. He will be missed.

Paul Leim
(Randy Travis, Shania Twain, Nashville studio giant)

There's simply nothing one can say.... I will miss Ron's great spirit, but will forever cherish his work for our community. My deepest sympathy to all of his family and friends.

Joe Franco
(The Good Rats, Twisted Sister)

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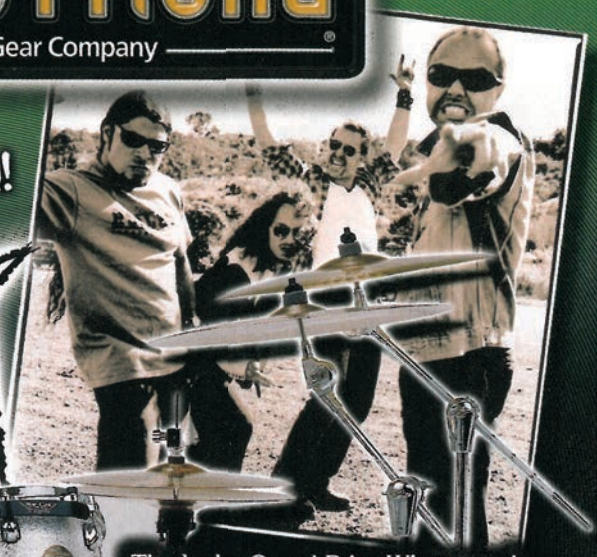

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Ron Spagnardi Tribute

I'm very sorry to hear about Ron's passing. I offer my condolences to all.

Cindy Blackman
(Lenny Kravitz, independent jazz artist)

I didn't know Ron well, but I must say that on the occasions when our paths crossed, he was always a most gracious man. My prayers are with his family, as well as with the *MD* staff.

Tommy Aldridge
(Ozzy Osbourne, Whitesnake)

Ron Spagnardi changed the drumming world with his magazine. We're all thankful for him. Our deepest sympathy and condolences go to his family and staff at *Modern Drummer*.

The Reyes Family (Walfredo Sr., Walfredo Jr., and **Daniel)**

I just heard the news about Ron. My heart goes out to the family and all of you at *MD*. He was a special individual with a vision and so much integrity. He will be missed.

Adam Nussbaum
(John Abercrombie, John Scofield)

I'm so sorry to hear about the passing of Ron. The drumming world will be a little on the quiet side now that his big contribution to our klang, brush, and pop universe has been silenced. Please pass along my sincere regards to Ron's family and friends. They can take comfort in knowing that at least now Buddy has someone to talk to in heaven. Long live Ron and his percussive vision, and long live all the modern drummers everywhere.

Victor DeLorenzo
(Violent Femmes)

Editor's note: Unfortunately, we received so many notes about Ron that it was impossible to fit them all here. Our sincere thanks go to all of the artists who shared their thoughts about him. ●

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IN THE PASSING OF RON SPAGNARDI.
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RON SPAGNARDI
1943-2003
A Man of Vision
A man that will never be forgotten...
from your friends at REMO

The Industry Pays Tribute

Ron Spagnardi never set out to become a figure in the drum industry. Like most of the people who populate that industry, Ron set out to be a player. But in launching *Modern Drummer* magazine, he inevitably forged alliances with the leading drum industry stakeholders, most of whom shared Ron's fondness for drums and drummers. Here's a sampling of their tributes to him. Each is testimony to the great esteem with which Ron was held in the drum community.

Ron and Isabel have been good friends of mine for over twenty-five years, and I always looked forward to getting together with them at the *Modern Drummer* Festival. I'll never forget the incredible parties Ron would throw for all the artists. We always had a ball. Thank you, Ron, for being so hospitable, generous, and most of all, for being a beautiful person. I will never forget your friendship and great contribution to our percussion world.

Lennie DiMuzio (Sabian)

Ron Spagnardi—the man, the musician, the entrepreneur, the visionary, the human being. He possessed all of these qualities and wore them with great dignity. Ron will be missed, both as a friend and colleague. With profound respect and admiration,

Vic Firth (Vic Firth Inc.)

Four or five years ago, *MD* editor Rick Van Horn called me. It seems Ron was rooting around in *MD*'s gear room looking for some sticks that he could sit down and practice with. Rick said to me, "Ron's in there muttering, 'I can't even find a pair of lousy 7As.' Will you please send him a pair? So I went into our factory, found a pair of the worst possible rejects, and had "Lousy 7A" imprinted on them. Ron called me shortly after that and could scarcely utter a word because he was laughing so hard. The last time I saw him, he reminded me of those lousy 7As, and he still had them. Ron's contribution to this industry can't be overstated. I miss him and miss knowing that he was always at the other end of the telephone.

Pat Brown (Pro-Mark)

My most memorable moments with Ron were spent in Italian restaurants. The evening prior to the *Modern Drummer* Festival, he would host a quiet dinner for his dear friend and much-loved industry figure, the late Steve Ettleson. I felt honored to have a standing invitation to attend and would always try to get to New Jersey on time!

Though quiet, unassuming, and almost shy, Ron could certainly hold his own over a plate of pasta, sharing drumming tales and having a good laugh. He was very sensitive and caring—a really nice person. When Steve Ettleson died, Ron was absolutely devastated. A photo from their last dinner still sits on Ron's desk. Yet for all he did to create and communicate this world of drumming we enjoy today, Ron Spagnardi was a reluctant hero. I guess we should understand that. After all, he was one of us—a drummer.

Wayne Blanchard (Sabian)

What I remember most about Ron Spagnardi was his passion and love for drumming and drummers. He was one of the few of them to realize his dream: *Modern Drummer* magazine. In fact, he *was* the magazine and the magazine was him. We have lost a person who cannot be replaced. Ron, we are all better off for having known you.

Roy Burns (Aquarian Industries)

With Ron's passing, the worldwide drum and percussion community has lost one of its most articulate and influential voices. For those of us who got to know him, we mourn the loss of a friend and celebrate a great life.

David McAllister (Latin Percussion)

Like Armand Zildjian, Ron leaves a legacy that few people can lay claim to. Although he created the industry standard in percussion magazines, he was a drummer at heart—he truly loved drummers. I was always impressed at how available he made himself, even to unimportant guys like me! His passing is an immense loss to the entire percussion community, a community that he largely created. God bless you, Ron.

John P. DeChristopher (Zildjian)

Few people in life take the risk or seize the opportunity to truly change things for all those who will come after. Ron Spagnardi was one who chose to do just that. Most drummers today have been touched by the magazine he created. As a publication that celebrates both the instruments and the brotherhood that sets drumming apart from all other groups of musicians, *Modern Drummer* has chronicled our world and become the voice of our art. Ron understood the bond that all drummers feel and chose to make it his life's work.

Jim Phiffer (Pearl)

I first spoke with Ron in 1978, and he always encouraged me in times when we shared concerns about our new companies ever becoming successful. A few years ago he asked if I would join him and others in a percussion ensemble to open the *MD* Festival. I told him I hadn't played professionally in years and really wasn't up for it. "No" was not an option. Ron told me everything would be fine and I would be among industry players like myself. When I heard the ensemble included Vic Firth and Roy Burns, I immediately called him and said, "What are you thinking? These are *great* players."

Like our talks in 1978, Ron reassured me that we should just go out and do it, and it turned out to be a most memorable time. He loved encouraging people and helping them through hard times. His dream was to have a magazine to bring drummers together, and he did just that. His success is a major part of drum history.

Don Lombardi (Drum Workshop)

All of us here at Yamaha are extremely saddened by the news of Ron's passing. His editorials are famous for bringing the drumming community together as a family—always encouraging, always inspiring, always determined to allow the music to take us to the next level of drumming. He reminded us that ultimately, despite our differences, we belong to one family with a love for the same instrument. Ron will be truly missed by all.

Jerry Andreas (Yamaha Drums)

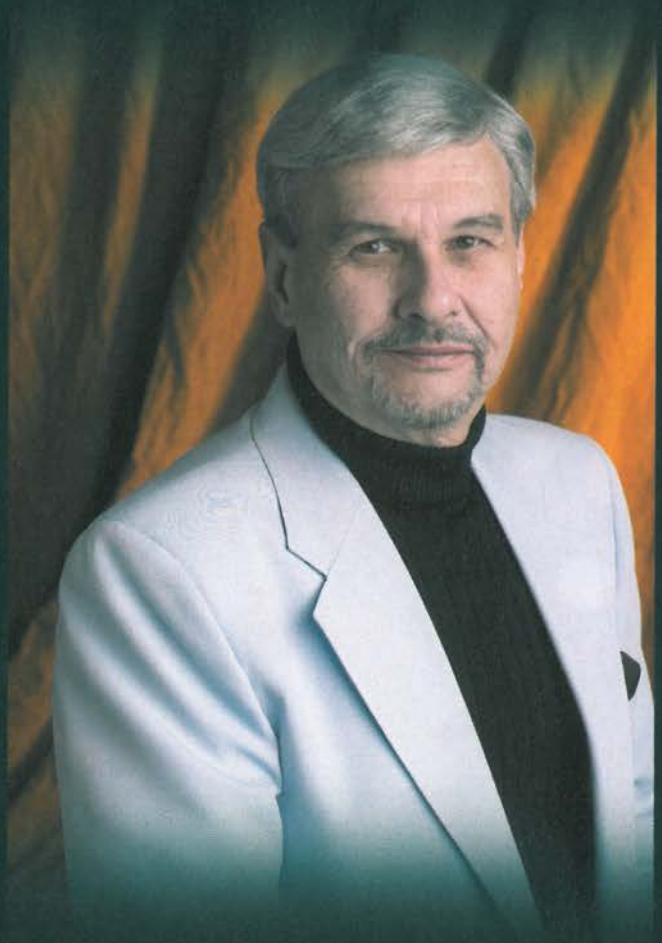
Ron Spagnardi was a very humble man. I don't think he ever fully understood the significance of his and Isabel's accomplishments with *Modern Drummer* magazine, *Drum Business*, and the *Modern Drummer* Festival Weekend. Today we take for granted the instant dissemination of information, but we have to remember that it was Ron who first gave the percussion community its forum for communication and education. We owe a great deal to this man.

Carol Calato (Regal Tip)

"In Ron's Memory"

A scholarship fund has been established in Ron's memory at his alma mater, Berklee College Of Music. Contributions can be made to The Ronald Spagnardi Memorial Scholarship, Berklee College Of Music, Attention Beverly Tryon, 1140 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215-3693. Drummers interested in applying for this scholarship can contact Berklee at (617) 747-2660 or tryon@Berklee.edu.

IN MEMORIAM



RON SPAGNARDI

OUR HEARTS GO OUT TO THE
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AND RON´S COLLEAGUES
FOR THE LOSS OF A
DEAR FRIEND AND FOUNDER OF
MODERN DRUMMER MAGAZINE

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT

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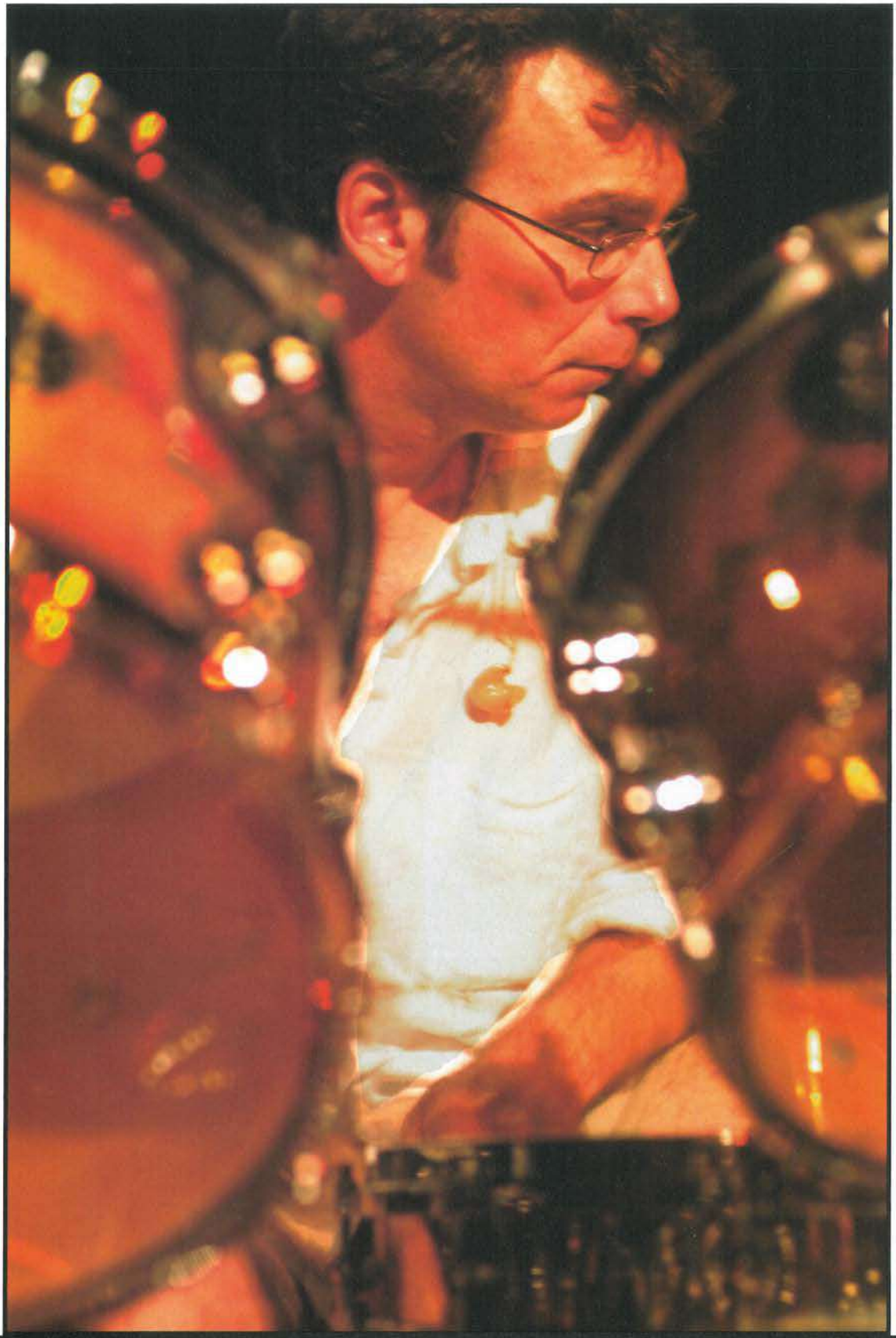

Gigs: Neil Young • Peter Frampton • Bonnie Raitt • Jackson Browne • Joe Walsh
LeAnn Rimes • Vince Gill • Mark Knopfler • Amy Grant • Lee Ann Womack

Nashville Ace

Chad Cromwell

Playing Songs On The Drums

Since the mid-'60s, guitar legend Peter Frampton has played with some of the finest drummers in the world—Jeff Porcaro, JR Robinson, and Humble Pie's Jerry Shirley, to name but a few. For the past six years, Frampton has relied on Nashville drummer Chad Cromwell. According to Peter, "For me, the drummer in any band is the engine that drives and steers the rest of the players. Chad is one of a handful of players in the world who has the sensitivity and overall feel to take the music to another level. After playing live and recording with Chad, I am totally spoiled. He's a very special player."

One of the qualities Chad Cromwell has—besides his warm, down-to-earth personality—is his ability to switch gears in the drum seat at a moment's notice. He's rocked out on record and on tour with such artists as Frampton, Neil Young, and Joe Walsh. But you can also find him laying down a traditional country groove with Vince Gill, Amy Grant, or LeAnn Rimes. He's also toured and recorded with former Dire Straits frontman Mark Knopfler for the past eight years.

Cromwell was born in Paducah, Kentucky on June 14, 1957. His family moved to Memphis, Tennessee when he was three. He commuted to Los Angeles in the mid-'80s before settling in Nashville in 1990. Since his move to the Music City, Chad has become one of the most in-demand session players on the scene, while still maintaining a busy touring schedule. Few drummers get the opportunity to have success at these two, often at-odds sides of the music business.

Story by Billy Amendola
Photos by Paul La Raia

MD: How did you become Peter Frampton's drummer?

Chad: I took the gig with Peter to sub for Eddie Bayers, who ran into some conflicts and was unable to do a short three-week run of dates. A good buddy of mine that I do session work with here in Nashville, Michael Rhodes, was playing bass for Peter at the time. He called and asked if I'd be interested in doing the gig. I've been with him for about six years.

MD: Was Peter's new record, *Now*, tracked live as a band?

Chad: Some of it was and some I overdubbed on. The way Peter does a lot of his stuff is, he'll demo the songs with co-writers that he'll be working with and then build up his demos. Some turned out to be really good performances.

MD: Let's go back to when you first started playing. What made you want to play drums?

Chad: I used to hang out with a Greek family that lived down the street from me. They had a Sears Silvertone guitar with the amp built into the case. Do you remember those? [laughs] And they had a set of drums from Sears as well. This was right around the height of The Beatles, so they even had catalog-order Beatle boots! I remember seeing that stuff and thinking it was really exotic. I was an athlete in school, so that was my focus. But when I went around to that house, it was really different and fascinating to me.

I originally wanted to play bass. Then that following year, a guy that I played ball with and his brother both got that same Silvertone drums & guitar setup. They invited me over, and I sat down on the drumset and just started playing. It was automatic. There was no thought given to it; I just could play them. So I got the drumming bug from that, and from then on I started asking my folks about getting a drumset. They wouldn't go for it, but they did give me a snare drum with a stand and a cymbal, along with a pair of drumsticks and a pair of brushes. I got on that snare drum and went at it.

MD: How old were you at the time?

Chad: I was nine years old. I just threw myself at playing that snare drum when I wasn't playing football or baseball.

MD: Who was the first drummer you saw that made you say "*Wow*"?

Chad: Buddy Rich was the first guy that made me go, "Look at that!" It was one of his performances on the Johnny Carson show. I remember the snare drum and hi-hat stuff that he did—just explosive and unbelievable. There's obviously never been anyone before or since like him. Buddy was just a force of nature behind the drumset.

MD: Who came next?

Chad: Ringo was a big influence. I always dug the way he played. It was a combination of his playing and those songs. Being so young, I didn't fully appreciate his drumming, but I knew I liked it. Then when I was twelve, my family moved to what I thought was the other side of the world, even though it was only about twenty miles away. I felt totally isolated and had to attend another school. It was a tough time for me. I turned that into rebellion. I kind of went left at that point, and I hated school and hated being an athlete.

All of a sudden, Woodstock—and that whole world—got me excited about music. Playing on a drumset became, "Alright, this is what I've got to do to get through whatever this time is." My folks bought me a Gretsch set that I put in my bedroom. It was a double bass kit, and I threw myself into those drums.

MD: Did you take lessons?

Chad: Not back then. Much later on I took a couple of jazz lessons. I'm mostly self-taught, though. I started playing along with records.

MD: What records would you play to?

Chad: I'd play with James Gang records and Humble Pie's *Live At The Fillmore*.

MD: That must be a trip now when you play "I Don't Need No Doctor" with Peter Frampton. [The guitarist was a member of Humble Pie.]

Chad: [laughs] Yeah, it is. In fact, it's ironic, isn't it?

MD: Who else would you listen to?

Chad: The art-rock stuff was starting to happen then, like Yes, Genesis, and Emerson, Lake & Palmer. I also got into Led Zeppelin. And I was still hanging onto The Beatles, even though they had broken up by that time.

By the time I was thirteen or fourteen, I was starting to think about getting serious about playing. I finally found myself getting into some garage bands around Memphis, and then high school band kind of stuff. Not proper school band, but "Hey, let's put a rock 'n' roll band together and see if we can get a couple of prom gigs." Then a musician friend I knew was in one of the more popular rock bands at the time, and their drummer quit, so he asked me if I wanted to play for them. That sort of got me into the mainstream professional scene in Memphis.

"The role of the drummer is to be the foundation. You're trying to provide peace of mind."

There's a studio in Memphis called Ardent Studios where a lot of records have been made—The Box Tops, part of *Led Zeppelin III* was done there, The Barkays, ZZ Top, Stevie Ray and Jimmie Vaughan.... It was *the* place. I had an opportunity with this band to get in after-hours and be part of a recording session. It was my first exposure to being in a studio. That *really* changed me. It was like, "Okay, I like this. I want more."

A few years later I met Jim Stewart and Bobby Manuel. Jim was the guy who founded Stax Records. Stax had since been sold, and Jim had signed a production deal with Atlantic Records, via Jerry Wexler, and they started producing their own records and artists. Their production company was called Daily Planet, and their big hit was "Disco Duck." You remember that song?

MD: Oh yeah, by the radio deejay Rick Dees.

Chad: Right. That was their big claim to fame. Dees was a Memphis deejay who made it big in LA. Anyway, I somehow wormed my way into getting to sit around and watch those guys, and they took me under their wing. That's when I learned how to make a living in this business. Those guys taught me so much about recording and drumming. They loaded me down with tapes of Al Jackson—I became a huge fan of his. JR Robinson was coming in at the time, so they had me check him out too. There was no better way to learn than just being a fly on the wall and watching these guys do their thing. And what I learned was how to play a groove. At that point, I became a disciple of R&B. It changed my whole approach to being a drummer.

MD: You can hear that in your playing. On the new Vince Gill record, *Next Big Thing*, there's a song called "She Never Makes Me Cry." You're right in the pocket on that one.

Chad: Thank you. That's the R&B thing I'm known for. I'm not the guy to call for flashy stuff. My attitude is, I don't play drums on songs, I play songs on drums. And that's what those guys showed me, what my role was in the making of records and playing music and songs. They showed me how to qualify every single note I played and make them consistent, steady, and solid. They also taught me "bass drum up."

MD: What's that?

Chad: If you listen to R&B music, the groove comes from the bottom end. The emphasis is from the bass and the pulse of the bass on up. With jazz, the bass drum really is more of an accent. Those guys taught me to play from the bottom up rather

than from the top down. I can't tell you how important that was for me. It put me into a pop radio and R&B style of playing.

MD: How did you get involved with Joe Walsh?

Chad: I met Joe in Memphis and ended up recording and jamming with him in a studio that belonged to the lady who's now my wife, Leslie. That kind of put me in a whole other direction. Joe was the first artist I worked with who I had grown up listening to. It was like, Man, how serendipitous is this? So I spent seven years off and on with him, and that got me to LA. I actually did two records with Joe. One was called *Got Any Gum?*, and then the last record I did was *Ordinary Average Guy*. Then a subsequent tour followed with Joe Vitale and me on double drums. Al Kooper was in that band too. Go figure that combination. It was wacky. [laughs]

MD: How did you hook up with Neil Young?

Chad: I was recommended by Neil's coproducer, Niko Bolas, as well as by Neil's bass player, Rick Rosas, who I had played with in Joe's band.

MD: How would Neil run his sessions?

Chad: It's almost more like stream of consciousness. He is totally *not* into crafting, refining, and making it sound like a perfect record. His thing is all about capturing the moment. He once said, "The deal is to get a good photograph of the song when it's born." The rawer, more instinctive, and spontaneous the moment can be while you're recording with him, the better it is.

MD: You also toured with Neil?

Chad: I hit it pretty hard with him for about two years, starting in '88 with his band The Bluenotes. We did *This Note's For You*, *Freedom*, and *Lucky Thirteen*. We did the song "Rockin' In The Free World," which was kind of the precursor to what was going on in Seattle.

I remember we were in Spokane, Washington, and all of a sudden he walked in with "Rockin' In The Free World," which had nothing to do with the blues. The next thing we know, within a matter of weeks, the tour was over and Neil, the bass player, and I found ourselves in New York City at the old Hit Factory cutting tracks. There's one song called "Don't Cry" that's like a textbook example of what Nirvana eventually did, going from that real sort of clean, quiet verse to a totally explosive chorus. We went from a ten-piece

Brothers In Arms

Mark Knopfler On Cromwell

Former Dire Straights leader Mark Knopfler has employed Chad Cromwell for the past eight years. He has a high opinion of the drummer. "I clicked with Chad right off," Knopfler says. "He's got the same sense of humor as I do. He's very musical, positive, and easy to hang out with. Chad also has the absolute confidence that what he's doing feels good, which is essential for a drummer.

"If anything," Knopfler continues, "Chad has improved over the years and expanded his range. He's always into the song more than himself. He'll do whatever it takes to get the song to work. Chad follows what each guy in the band is doing, all the while putting together his own thing. He'll notice straight away if someone changes direction or sound. It's a combination of experience and listening ability. I always have a good time working with Chad, from the first downbeat."

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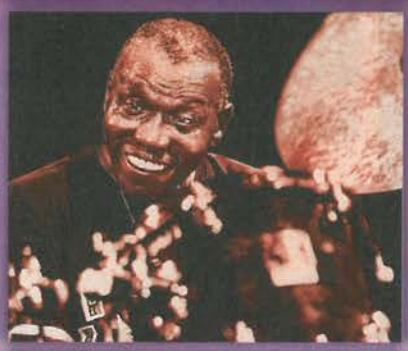

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Chad Cromwell

blues band with horns to a three-piece thrash group.

MD: What led you to Jackson Browne?

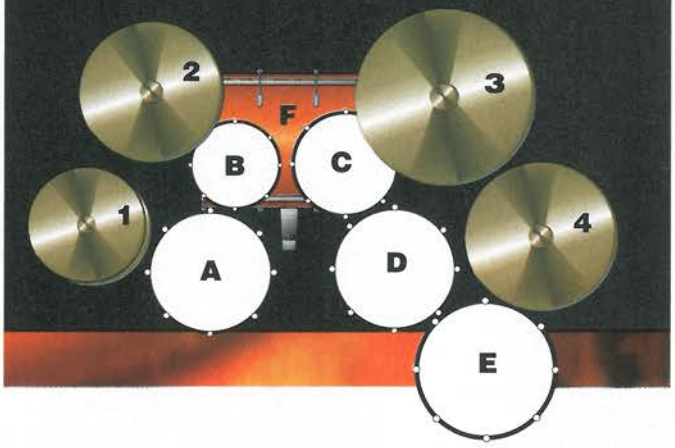
Chad: Before my stint was up with Neil, I went in and did the Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young record *American Dream*. Joe Vitale also played on it along with bass player Bob Glaub. That's how I met Bob. He was still playing for Jackson Browne at the time. Those guys had launched a tour, but the drummer wasn't working out. They had to make a change in a one-week period of time, and Bob recommended me. I had just finished the tour with Neil, and the next day I had show tapes for Jackson. I hadn't met him, until he called me the day I got home from Neil's tour. They flew me up to St. Louis and I watched the show. I met them at the hotel afterwards and said, "I'm your guy." And they said, "Great, fly to LA tomorrow. We

Cromwell's Live Setup

Drums: DW Timeless Timber
A. 5x14 brass snare
B. 8x10 tom
C. 9x12 tom
D. 14x14 floor tom
E. 16x16 floor tom
F. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" Mastersound hi-hats
2. 18" K Constantinople crash
3. 22" A Custom ride
4. 19" A Custom crash

Hardware: DW, with a 9000 series single pedal (felt beater, spring tension "somewhat tight")
Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on snare (medium tuning, no muffling) and tom batters (mid-to-low tuning, no muffling), clear Ambassadors on bottoms of toms, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter (medium tuning, DW muffler inside)
Percussion: Meinl shakers and tambourines
Electronics: Macintosh Powerbook 64 Titanium running Cubase and Reason
Microphones: Royer 122s
Sticks: Pro-Mark custom model (hickory, resembles 5B)



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start rehearsing."

MD: When did you make the move to Nashville?

Chad: When I was on Jackson's tour, we played in Nashville at an amphitheater and my wife, Leslie, met me there. I got up the next morning and left to continue Jackson's tour, and she went house hunting. When I finished Jackson's tour, we came back home to Memphis to spend the Christmas holidays, and then we packed up and moved to Nashville.

MD: What advice would you give to a drummer wanting to move to Nashville? I've always heard that the session scene is almost impossible to break in to.

Chad: It is. But I would advise drummers to do the same thing I was told, which is be patient and be prepared to do whatever you have to do as you wait your turn. There's no automatic in. I had a really slammin' résumé coming in to town, right off of Jackson Browne and Neil Young, but it didn't mean a thing.

At that time, Larry Londin was still alive. There were teams of musicians here that did the lion's share of the work. So if you wanted to get in on that team, the only way was if one of those guys couldn't make it. By the time I came here, there were four or five other guys in line ahead of me waiting for their shot. That was the point I decided to stop touring for a while. I wanted to dig in and get my career started in Nashville.

My wife and I starved for two years—I mean *desperate* times. We got dangerously close to bankruptcy. Several times I thought this wasn't going to work. I was married, building a house, and had a baby coming. It was tough times. But it all worked out. Now we have two beautiful children, Sheppard and Shannon, who are ten and eight.

MD: Obviously you have a supportive wife. That really helps.

Chad: Very much so. And she understands the business.

MD: Who was your first record with in Nashville?

Chad: The first artist of note that I recorded with was Joan Baez. Willie Weeks was on bass for that session. And one of the guys who produced that record, Kenny Greenberg, has since become one of my best friends in town. He co-wrote Amy Grant's "House Of Love" with Wally Wilson. So at that point I started getting calls for demo dates, and one thing led to another.

Tony Brown, who ran MCA Records here

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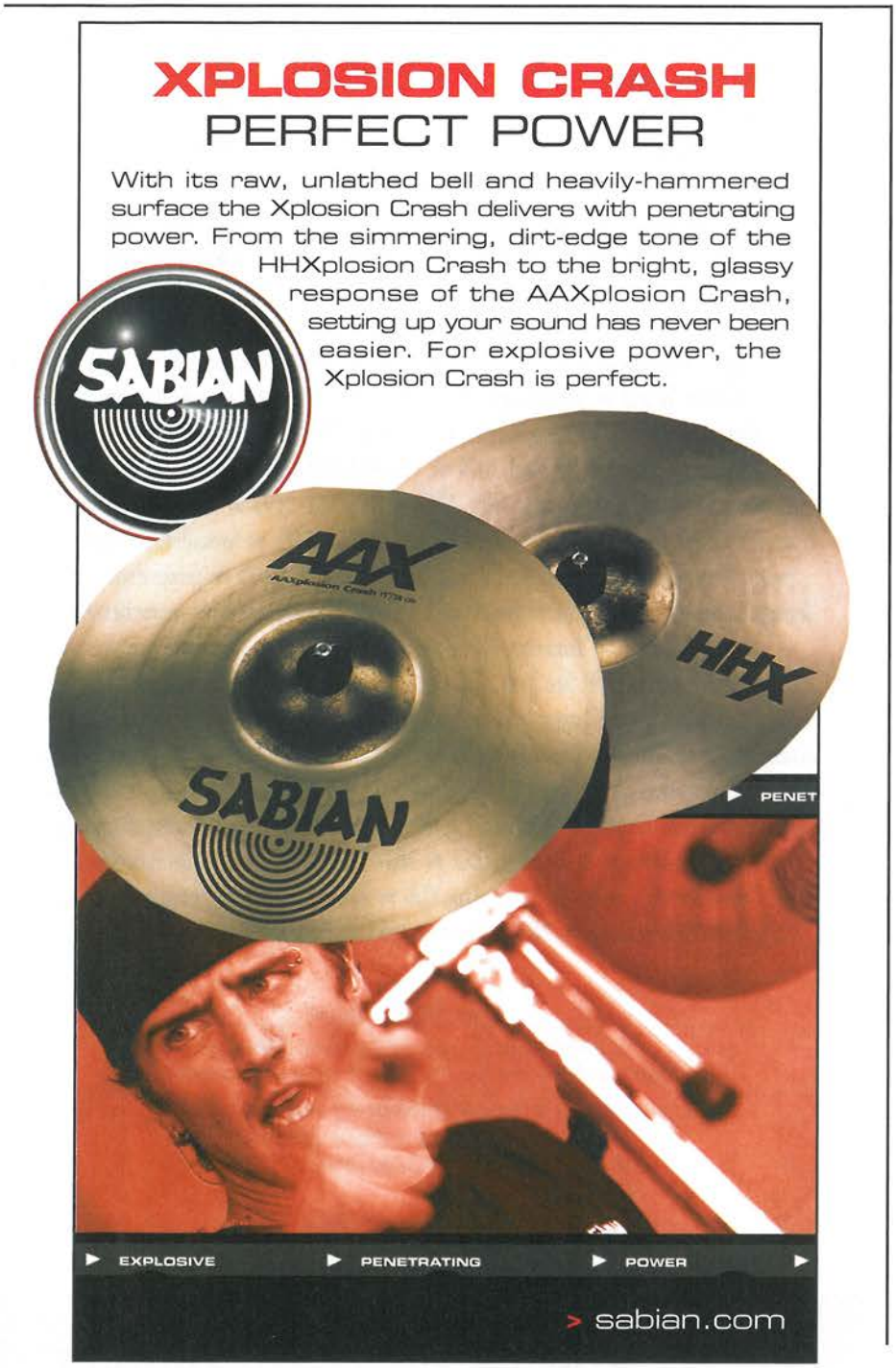
for years, is one of the most important people in this town. He played keyboards for Elvis for a while, and he signed Steve Earl. He's done some amazing stuff for this town. He was the first established country mainstay guy who gave me a shot. I also have to mention Richard Bennett, who is a well-known, highly respected guitarist. I played with Richard in Mark Knopfler's band. Richard has become a dear friend of mine.

MD: Listening to Knopfler's solo recordings, there's more country influence than you would expect.

Chad: Oh definitely. Mark obviously fell in love with Nashville. And then, by virtue of that, that's how I ended up meeting him through a recommendation. Then the next thing you know, we've recorded everything Mark's put on tape for the past eight years. We actually started recording together in '95. Then the first tour we did together was in '96, and that's how the band The 96ers came about.

MD: With everything you've got going on live, you still stay busy playing sessions. Not many guys get the opportunity to do both.



Chad: It's been a really good thing for me. I stay pretty busy by virtue of the fact that I do *some* touring. Obviously there's a certain amount of work that I'm not doing here. It puts me in a position of letting go of certain regular-call clients, some of which I'm okay about letting go, some of which I'm *not* okay about letting go. I never have been just a dyed-in-the-wool session guy or dyed-in-the-wool touring musician.

The way I think of it is, it's like two completely different disciplines. There's a craft side of things when you're a session player, because you're going in and making records and trying to get X number of songs recorded in a specific amount of time—and you've got to adapt to that quickly. It's not like when you're in a band and you've got a year to write your songs, rehearse a month to work it all out, and *then* go in the studio.

What I do is, I show up on the day, charts are handed out, and generally on a country date we'll do one or two songs per session, which is a three-hour block of time. With some artists who are more established and have bigger budgets—like Mark Knopfler—we'll use a whole day to work on one song. And that's great because you can really explore the territory. Vince Gill does the same thing. He gets an acoustic guitar out and plays the song for us, instead of us just listening to a demo. That way there's no distracting information that can lead you in a certain direction.

MD: When you're doing a country record as opposed to a rock record, is your mindset different? For instance, will you not play a certain fill on a country date because it's more of a rock fill?

Chad: There are certain things you stay away from. To be honest, with country playing, I try to keep my fills to a minimum. And if I do play any, they're basically little stepladders into a verse, bridge, solo, or ending. They're not going to be two-measure, drawn-out sorts of fills. That's not saying I haven't done that on country records, though. But the majority of the time the fills are dead-on and straightforward.

MD: Do you normally record with a click?

Chad: Most times I cut to a click or some kind of loop. I love playing to loops because they're more musical. And from a drummer's standpoint, they're great

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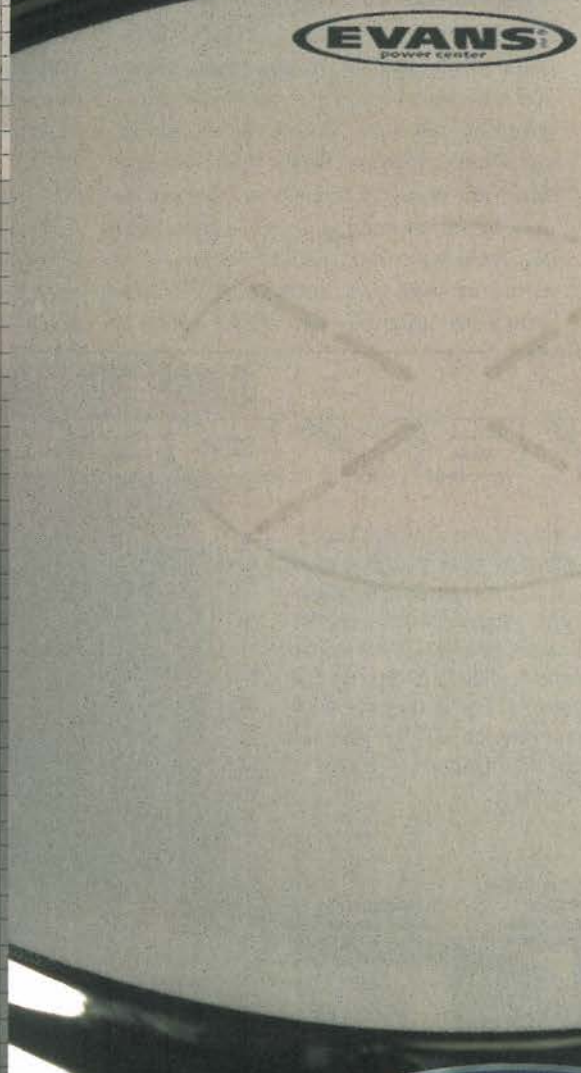

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because it frees you up to be a little more expressive with the drum part.

For a while there, the loop was half of the drum track on a lot of records I was doing. That said, sometimes the very best way to record is without a click, but you've got to have a hell of a band to do that.

MD: I think an individual's personality has a lot to do with getting call-backs, live or in the studio. Do you agree?

Chad: Definitely. You've got to be a team player. It's all about that. I've seen some pretty strong personalities come in and destroy a room. They might be amazing players, but that's only part of it. You've got to be able to get on with people, *especially* when you're touring.

I think the role of the drummer is to be the foundation. You're trying to provide peace of mind. It's your responsibility to make sure everyone *else* on that stage is feeling secure, and it requires a certain kind of personality to be able to do that. There aren't many Keith Moons in the world who get to make a living the way he played. God bless him—I totally love Moon, but you know, a loose cannon behind a drumset can be a really destructive thing.

MD: Any other words of wisdom you'd like to share?

Chad Tracks

Recordings

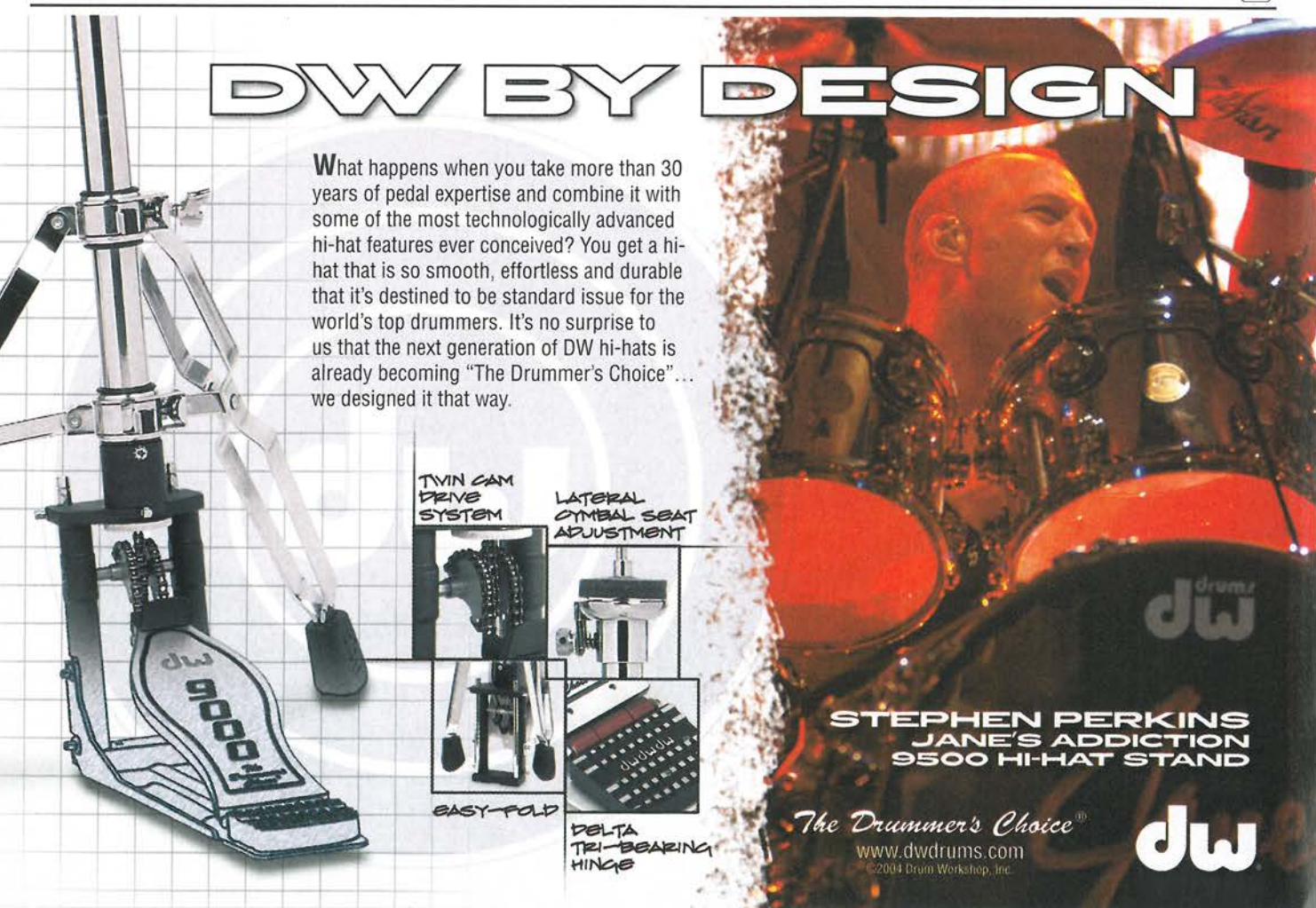
Artist	Album
Neil Young	Freedom
Mark Knopfler	Sailing To Philadelphia
Mark Knopfler	The Ragpicker's Dream
Peter Frampton	Live In Detroit
Kim Richey	Self-Titled
Vince Gill	Next Big Thing
Lee Ann Womack	I Hope You Dance
Joe Walsh	Ordinary Average Guy
Al Anderson	Pay Before You Pump

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Peter Gabriel	So	Manu Katché, Jerry Marotta
Beatles	all	Ringo Starr
Stax Volt Collection	anything	Al Jackson
Oscar Peterson Trio	anything	various drummers
Al Green	anything produced by Willie Mitchell	Al Jackson, Howard Grimes
Chris Whitley	Living With The Law	Ronald Jones

Chad: Don't use my methods, kids. [laughs] I would say to any young drummer who wants to do this, go back and listen to the old Stax, Muscle Shoals, Philly, and Detroit records. Study them, because that's the practical lineage to what we do now as far as making records goes. And that includes country music. Country is no different from pop, rock, or R&B. The drumming principles are all the same. If you listen to any of those records, what you're going to find coming from the drumkit are very simple parts with a couple of drum fills that you'll *never* forget.

For more with Chad, check out February's Web Exclusive interview at www.moderndrummer.com. You can also hear some of the tracks discussed in this piece at the site on MD Radio.



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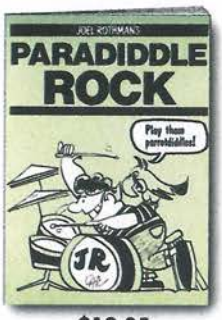

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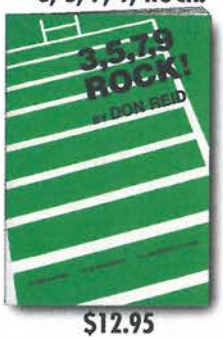

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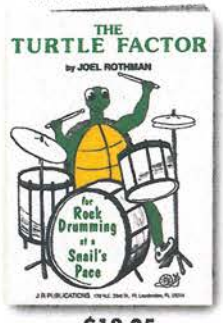

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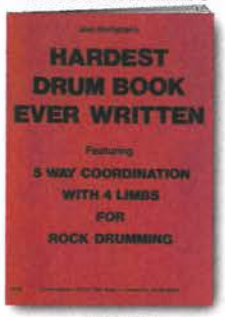

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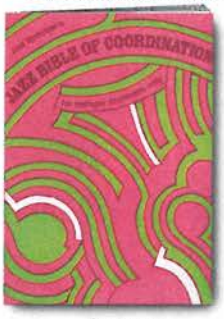

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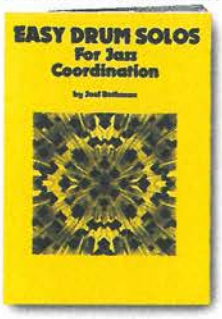

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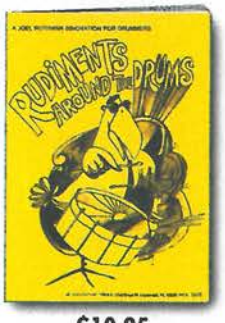

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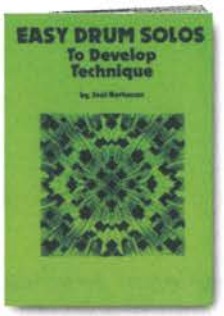

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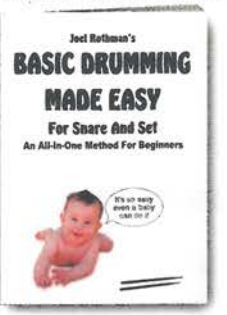

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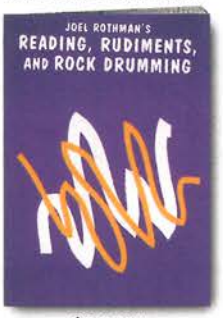

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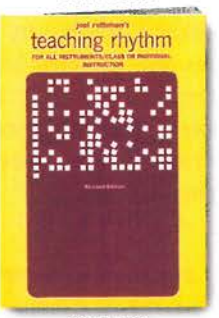

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Editor's note: MD *founder and publisher Ron Spagnardi wrote hundreds of articles on a variety of drumming topics. The following piece is one of the last things he was working on before he passed away. We hope you enjoy it.*

The Half-Time Shuffle

It's All About The Feel

by Ron Spagnardi

The half-time shuffle, so expertly used by players like Bernard Purdie and the late Jeff Porcaro, among others, should be a part of every drummer's vocabulary. The following examples will give you a good foundation for this important feel.

First, practice the basic 16th-note-triplet pattern to get a feel for the half-time shuffle. Play the right hand on a closed hi-hat.

1

Now let's add the bass drum on 1 and 3 and a solid snare drum backbeat on 2 and 4.

2

Once you've developed a feel for the basic beat, we can begin to add notes to make the patterns more interesting. Try incorporating the additional bass drum notes shown in example 3.

3

Here's another variation for the bass drum.

4

Now the real fun begins, as we start to add ghost notes on the snare drum. Be sure to play the ghost notes at a low level, *much* softer than the backbeats. The feel of the half-time shuffle is lost if the balance between the softer ghost notes and the stronger backbeats is not carefully observed. Practice adding the two ghost notes in the following example.

5

Here ghost notes have been added to the first and third triplets.

6

The creative challenge of the half-time shuffle lies in mixing varied bass drum patterns with ghost notes, while maintaining a solid backbeat, which acts as an anchor. In each of the following examples, the interplay between the bass drum and snare drum gets increasingly complex. Just be certain to always focus on proper balance as you play through the patterns: hi-hat and bass drum at a moderate volume, a strong snare drum backbeat, and very soft, subtle ghost notes.

7

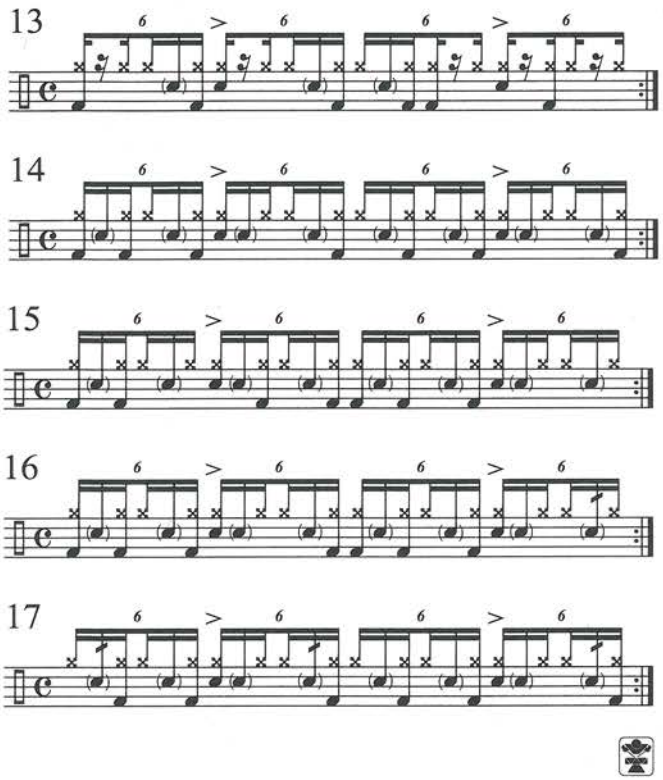
8

9

10

11

12



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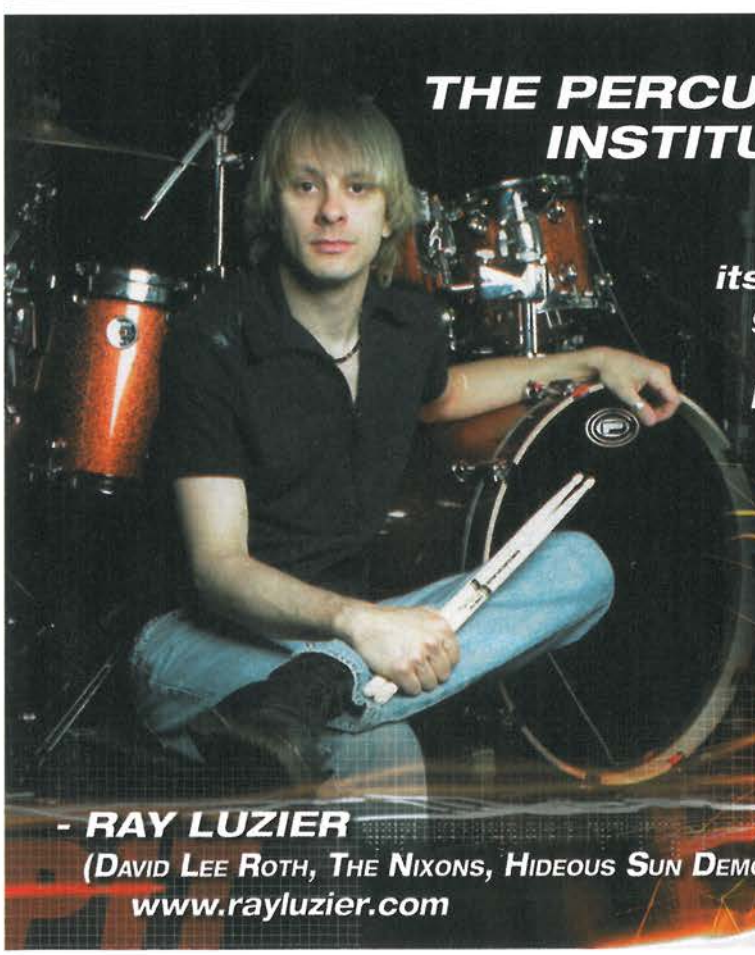

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Odd Times

Part 4: Soloing Across The Barline

by John Riley

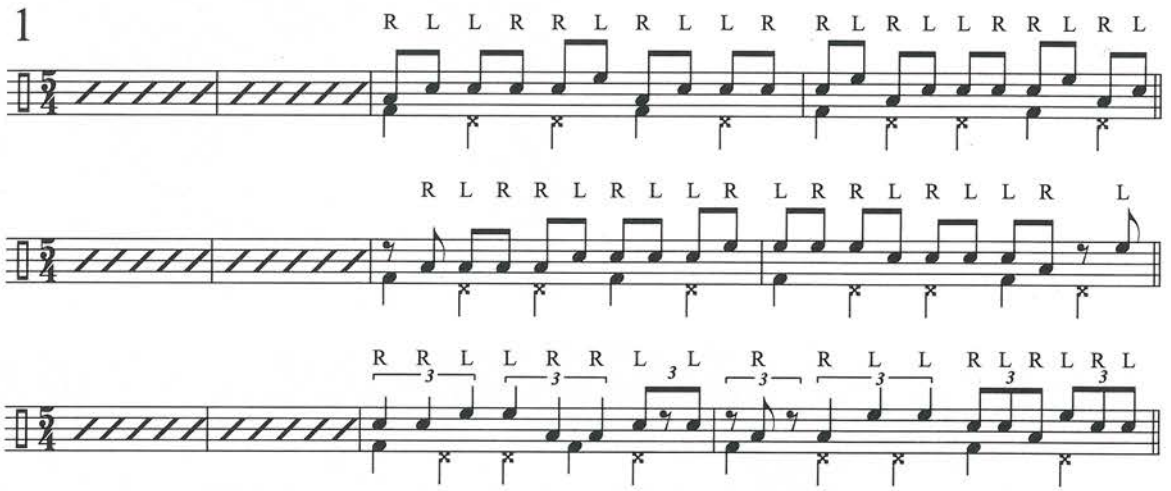
MUSIC KEY

T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
H.H. w/foot

Playing in odd times is fun and challenging. It gets even more interesting when common motivic ideas are played in 5/4. In my previous column (December 2003), we worked with building solos by combining one-measure phrases in 5/4. Here we'll work in two-measure phrases, and we'll stretch the boundaries by employing 3/4, 4/4, and 5/8 phrases to camouflage beat 1 of the second bar.

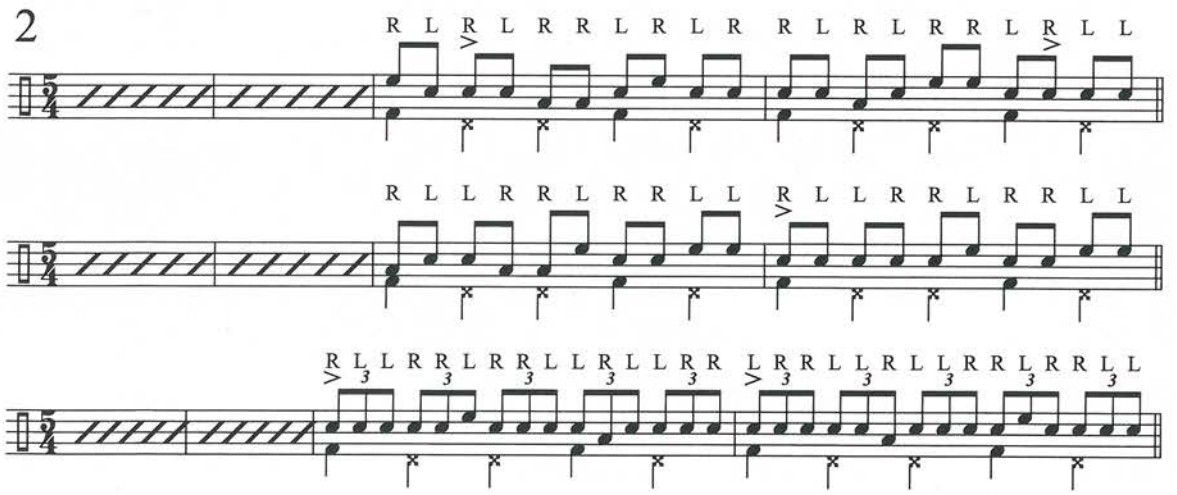
Let's begin with ideas built from the six-stroke roll, paradiddles, and quarter-note triplets. Play two measures of 5/4 time before each phrase. Maintaining the standard pattern with your feet will be challenging at first, but doing so will help you keep your place. (Be sure to swing all of the notated 8th notes.)

1



These phrases, based on two five-note sticking patterns, create interesting rhythmic counterpoint.

2



Finally, here are a few solo ideas based on common three-, four-, and five-note ideas.

I hope these four articles on odd time playing have inspired you to explore the genre. Once you've internalized these ideas, try playing them without their respective foot ostinatos. Combine these ideas with those from the earlier column, and with your own phrases, to build longer solos in 5/4. Experiment with these concepts in other odd time signatures; the possibilities are endless.

Strive to eliminate musical boundaries. There should be no restrictions on your musical freedom and expression, regardless of time signature. Good luck!

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The Dave Matthews Band's
Carter Beauford
"Grey Street"

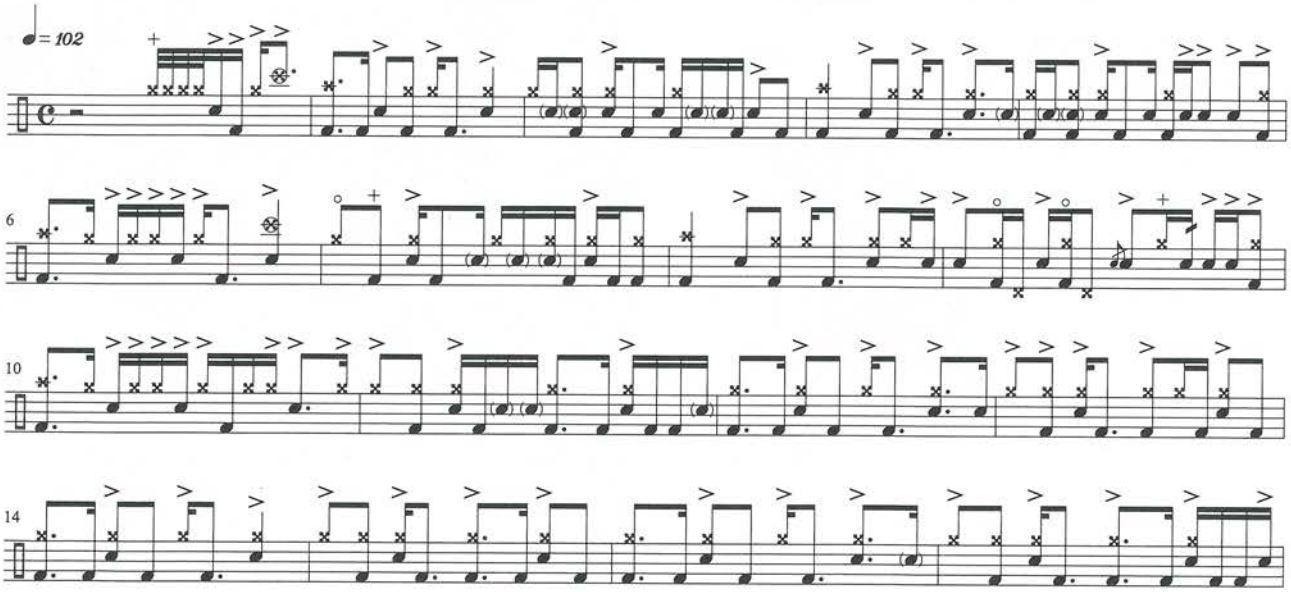
Transcribed by Joe Bergamini

Carter Beauford is a throwback to the glory days of fusion and funk drumming. He plays with the pocket of David Garibaldi and Clyde Stubblefield, the energy and chops (and left-hand lead) of Simon Phillips and Billy Cobham, and the improvisational abilities of Jo Jones. "Grey Street," from the most recent Dave Matthews Band studio release, *Busted Stuff*, shows Carter in top form.

As in most of his performances, Carter chooses not to play a straight riding pattern on the hi-hat during the main verse groove of the song. The sound he produces is a full-drumset funk concept that uses all limbs to create a groove, without repeating parts in any of the limbs. This can be extremely difficult to master and is learned through a systematic study of jazz and funk independence. Read along with the tune and check out how the hi-hat pattern and snare drum ghost notes outline the main pulse defined by the bass drum.

Also of interest on the track are the choruses, where Carter uses the ride cymbal bell (notated with a diamond shape) to place syncopated accents in a theme that recurs in each chorus. Check out how these accents make the bass drum part sound even funkier. Also pay attention to Carter's choice of splash or China cymbal sounds on the downbeats (where other drummers often use a crash cymbal). Carter's use of the splash is original and funky.

Carter also has a serious penchant for beat syncopation and displacement. Check out the funky stuff in measures 50 through 51 and 62 through 65, among other places. The rideout of the song (measure 128 to end) is played with a steady ride cymbal pulse and lots of tricky syncopations all over the kit. Carter's rhythmic inventiveness, independence, and full-on chops are on display here. Right before the fadeout (measures 123 and 124) he treats us to an especially challenging flourish.



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Carter Beauford

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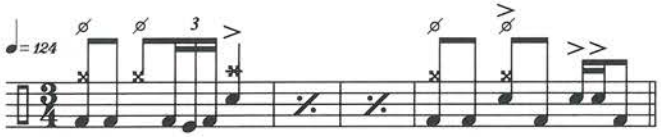
A Perfect Circle's
Josh Freese
Thirteenth Step

by Ed Breckenfeld

The long-awaited second album from modern art rockers A Perfect Circle is finally out. With Tool frontman Maynard Keenan's distinctive vocal style setting the mood, comparisons between the drumming of Josh Freese and Tool's Danny Carey are inevitable. Josh's patterns, while not as complicated as math-rock mastermind Carey's, are consistently interesting and creative, and completely suit the band's dreamy compositions. Freese also brings rare taste and feel to his playing, with just enough flash to keep things exciting.

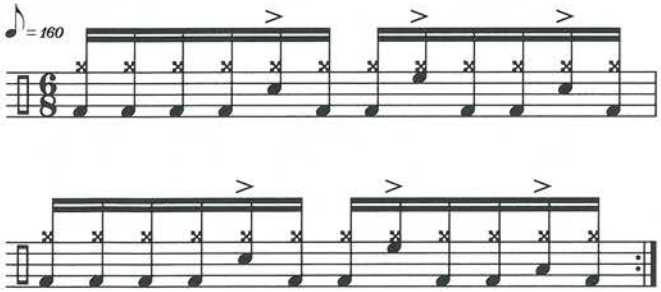
"The Package"

Josh's double bass lick adds explosiveness to the end of the lead track's bridge (at the 4:41 mark of the tune).



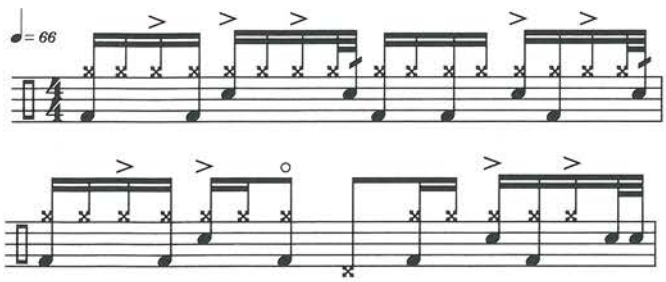
"Weak And Powerless"

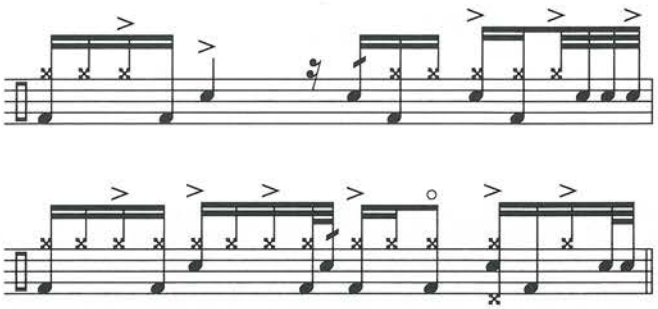
A repetitive staccato 6/8 beat relentlessly drives the verse of this song. Note the subtle difference between the last beat of each measure. (0:23)



"The Noose"

The re-intro drum beat in this song features great accent and drag work, coupled with an unusual stop/start effect. The result spells *groove* with a capital G! (1:52)



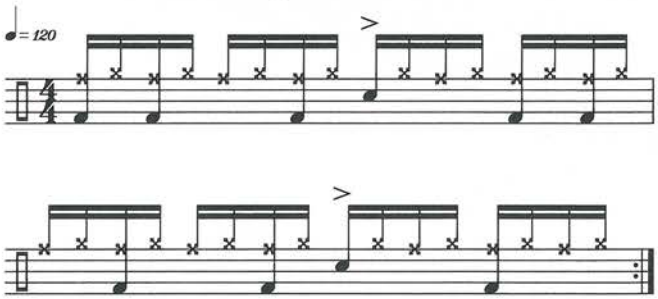


"Blue"

Josh gives a rhythmic twist to the drum fill leading into the first chorus of this tune. (1:08)

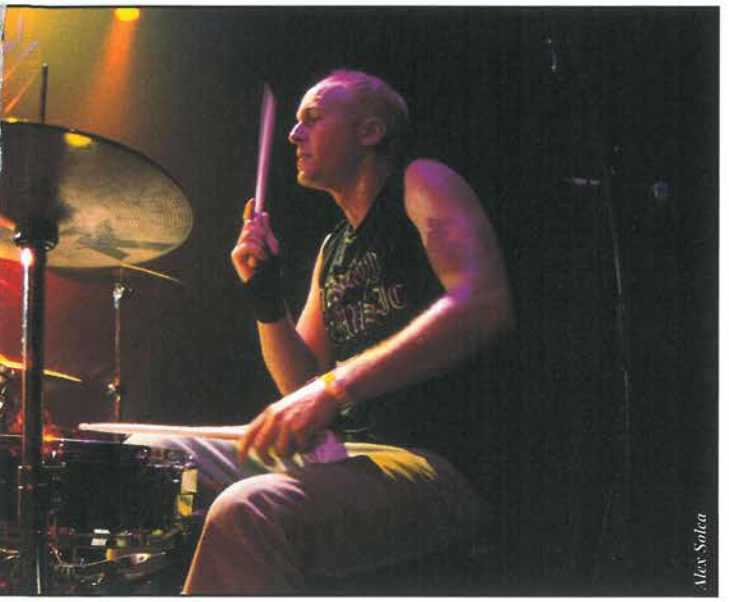
"Vanishing"

Here's a wonderful idea for a cymbal part. The two-handed alternating ride cymbal and hi-hat pattern sounds like a strange echo in this half-time verse groove. (1:11)

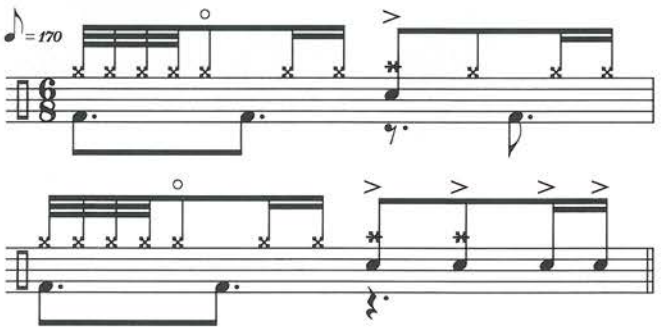


"The Outsider"

This little gem of a beat immediately follows the song's first chorus. Notice the two-against-three polyrhythm of the bass drum

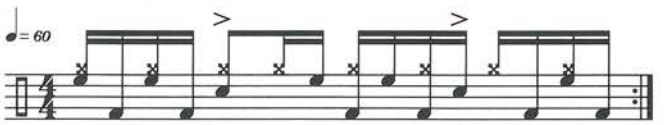

Alex Solca

pattern in this 6/8 groove. (1:17)



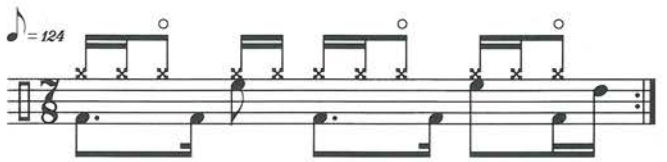
"Crimes"

Here's one of those drum beats that sounds like it's in an odd time signature, but it's really in 4/4. Freese accomplishes this by the displacement of his tom and bass drum, coupled with the movement of the snare backbeat. (0:58)



"Gravity"

On the other hand, Josh's 7/8 groove makes this song feel as smooth and comfortable as it would if he were playing in 4/4 time. (0:24)



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Getting More Sounds From Your Kit

Part 2: Investing In New Sounds

by Larry T. Kennedy

Last month we examined the many ways to get additional sounds out of your existing drumkit. That's an important process that can save you time and money when it comes to expanding your musical palette. But eventually, you might get to the point where you've exhausted the versatility of what you already own. At that point, you'll likely want to invest in some new gear to achieve new sounds.

Additional Drums

Needless to say, adding drums to your existing kit will broaden your acoustic spectrum. With an eye to versatility, a piccolo snare drum (3" to 4" in depth, 13" to 14" in diameter) is an excellent first investment. Not only can it provide a tighter "pop" on a song that calls for a more cutting snare sound, you could also throw off the snares for a sort of timbale sound. (And just having a "spare" snare drum already on the kit in case of emergency is always a good idea.)

If a traditional piccolo is not to your taste, there are dozens of "auxiliary" snares available, most of which are 10" or 12" in diameter and come in a variety of depths. Some of these are designed to be "flown" off a stand on a multi-clamp, so they can be put virtually anywhere on the kit.

You might also consider adding toms to your kit. Many manufacturers offer add-on tom packages (8" and 10" rack toms on a stand, or additional floor toms) for entry-level "package" kits. Toms are usually available individually in higher-priced drum series. And don't overlook options like Tama's Octobans, or Remo's venerable RotoToms.

Pearl's Primero is one version of the many mini-timbale models currently available.

Lately, pros like Dave Weckl and Simon Phillips have added 18" bass drums to their kits. The only limits are your budget, your imagination, and the sizes of the stages you play on.

Additional Cymbals

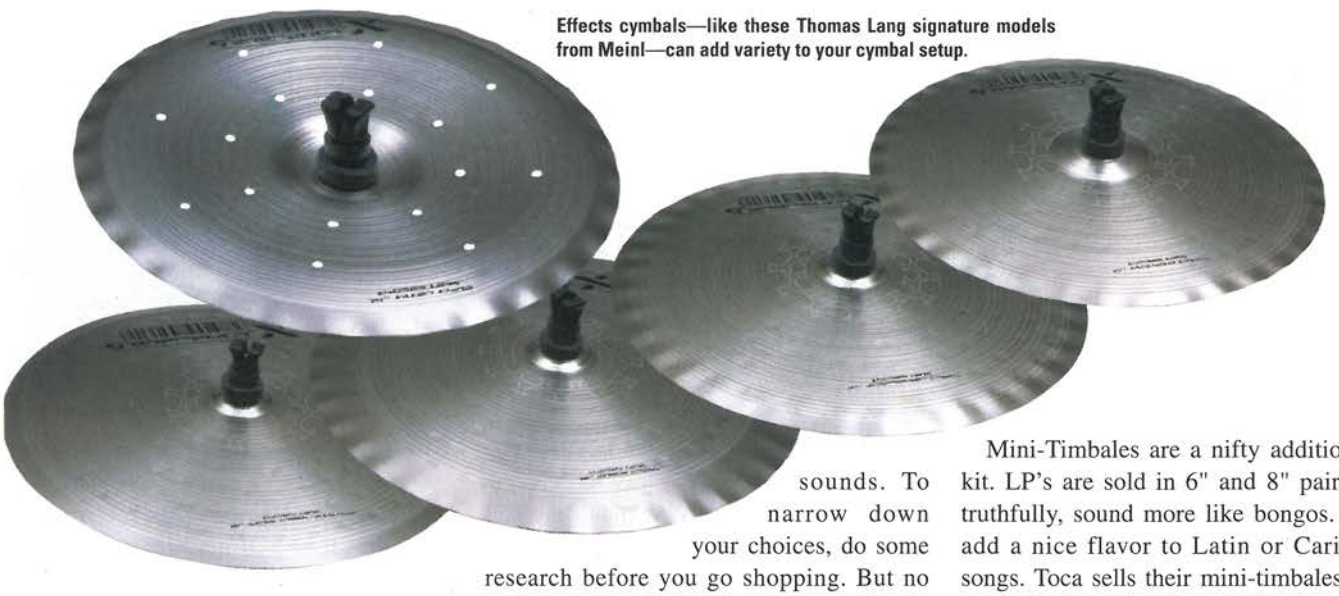
When it comes to adding cymbal sounds to your kit, my advice is to avoid more "gimmicky" models and go for versatility. For example, I don't know if I'll ever own a China cymbal. The sounds of most Chinas I've heard are too specific; I wouldn't want to use that sound more than a couple of times a night. Likewise with splashes: The one that I own has a very thin sound, and I don't want to use it too often. Of course, rules are made to be broken, and many drummers use special-purpose cymbals frequently to good effect.

I also advise against adding any cymbal that's too close in sound to those you already own. A 17" crash from the same series as your 16" and 18" crashes probably won't sound noticeably different to the audience. Instead, go for something from a different series altogether, and perhaps in a more dramatically different size.

Looking again at versatility, think in terms of multiple applications for a cymbal. For example, when I next shop for cymbals, I'll probably look for a thin 12" or 13" model that could double as a small crash on soft songs and a splash on loud songs.

Most of the major cymbal manufacturers, in their catalogs and on their Web sites, offer great suggestions about adding cymbal

Auxiliary snare drums, like these SX models from Pacific Drums And Percussion, are available in a wide range of sizes.



Effects cymbals—like these Thomas Lang signature models from Meinl—can add variety to your cymbal setup.

sounds. To narrow down your choices, do some research before you go shopping. But no matter what you're looking for, remember to take your own cymbals with you. This will give you an immediate and accurate impression of how a new candidate might fit into the ensemble.

Don't forget that adding cymbals or drums to your kit will also involve adding hardware to hold the new items, as well as finding the stage space to accommodate that hardware. To reduce your investment and the amount of real estate you'll require, consider using clamps, extension arms, and other accessory items available from most drum and hardware companies. After all, it's silly to pay more for a stand than for the cymbal it will hold.

Several manufacturers offer mounting brackets that permit bells, blocks, and tambourines to be played with a bass drum pedal. This model is from Gibraltar.

Percussion Instruments

Several percussion and hardware manufacturers offer special mounting brackets that allow you to play a cowbell, block, or tambourine with a bass drum pedal. This is a great way to use your left foot to add a bit of color to a Latin song, or to create a cowbell backbeat on a rock tune.

Here are a couple of tips regarding these brackets, based on my own experience. First, purchase additonal L-rods so that you can attach one to each bell, block, and tambourine that you plan to use. It's easier and faster to swap the instruments in and out of the bracket on a dark stage if they're already on their own L-rods. Also, I recommend the use of Regal Tip's Walfredo Reyes cowbell beater. It has hard and soft playing surfaces, and its vertical length allows better contact with a variety of instruments. (I was forever getting my conventional bass drum beater stuck inside my tambourine.)

Synthetic blocks come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, all of which create distinctive sounds. LP's Jam Blocks also offer excellent mounting flexibility.

Mini-Timbales are a nifty addition to a kit. LP's are sold in 6" and 8" pairs that, truthfully, sound more like bongos. These add a nice flavor to Latin or Caribbean songs. Toca sells their mini-timbales separately, in 6", 8", 10", and 13" sizes, from which you can create a custom setup. Pearl's Primera models are 13" timbale add-ons, complete with mount and tom arm. Meinl offers similar models. Of course, you may opt for a full-size set of timbales if you play a lot of music where this sound is desired.

Those who play country music, or other styles where a cross-stick sound is required, should consider using a synthetic block. I use LP's lower-pitched Jam Block, mounted on my hi-hat pull rod. The block makes a louder and more consistent "click" sound than cross-sticking on the snare does. Blocks of one form or another are available from all of the percussion companies. I particularly like the versatility of positioning offered by the Jam Blocks, which can be mounted from either end or from the middle of the back.

Different Strokes

Since the types of music that you and I play are different—as are our musical tastes and budgets—what works for me might not work for you. But I hope that I've succeeded in giving you some ideas to explore.

Just do me one favor: Don't behave like a guitarist. It seems that every time the average guitarist buys a new toy, he or she wants to use it on every song. Do your experimenting at home or in the rehearsal room. When you're *performing*, use your new sounds tastefully—and only when they add to the music. Remember, a small amount of something new can make a huge contribution to your band's sound.

Humility And Bravery

A Few Words About Mark And Ron

by Billy Ward

I've been feeling blue lately. You see, when I was a year old, I used to jump out of my crib headfirst. (Why didn't my parents know then that I needed a set of drums?) I jumped out so often that, now as an adult, my neck is a bit of a mess. It acted up recently and I had to take a break to heal and get my strength back. And I'm a horrible sick person. My wife threatens to leave me, and to be honest, that threat is what drives me toward recovery. Well, the following is about two people who aren't like me at all.

"Facing each moment truthfully has everything to do with drumming, but it has more to do with life."

I met Mark Craney (drummer for Jeff Beck, Gino Vanelli, Jethro Tull, Tommy Bolin, Jean-Luc Ponty, and many others) when I moved to LA from New York in 1988. He was just leaving the stage after playing at a drum benefit, and I overheard him say to his friends, "If any of you find a big toe up there on the stage, it's mine." This is how Craney stands at the edge of oblivion. He faces life's sharpest edges with humor. He's one of the "Supermans" in my life.

Back in 1986, Mark was on tour with Tower Of Power. As the band's plane was landing in Oakland, California, he had a total failure of his kidneys. The next two years included many failed attempts at regaining their use, but in the end, he needed to be on dialysis. In 1988, Mark received a kidney transplant, but by then medical complications led to the amputation of one of his big toes, which led to most of his drumming muscles becoming emaciated. He's been battling serious health issues ever since.

Mark somehow managed to tour with famed Animals vocalist Eric Burdon from '94 to '97. Try to imagine what he was going through. There was Mark, leaning on his cane, flying around the world, and playing drums with Burdon. He had no big toe, perhaps less strength in his left hand than a four-year-old, and he could hardly walk up one flight of stairs. But he was playing drums and rocking out!

During the final year of touring, Mark was receiving kidney dialysis wherever they traveled—all over the world, and three times a week. Eventually the touring became too much for him and he had to stop. He's still receiving dialysis three times a week and still hoping for another organ transplant.

Mark Craney is brave. I'm talking about bravery of the highest order. He faces his obstacles head on, with no excuses, and moves on. To me, facing each moment truthfully has everything to do with drumming, but it has *more* to do with life.

For those of you who don't know, I'm happy to say that Mark is still on our planet and living in Los Angeles. He's teaching now, and believe me, a lesson with him is a lesson in life. (If you're interested in contacting Mark about lessons or just to say hi, you can email him at markcraney@earthlink.net.)

Humility

I first met Ron Spagnardi at the *Modern Drummer* Festival, where I performed in 2000. At the time, he seemed like a kid who was overjoyed at hanging out with this year's drumming heroes. Later, when I met him again as he sat behind his desk at the offices of *Modern Drummer*, I saw a selfless, curious, and very open man. Please allow me to give more details.

I've been to a few major drum companies, and when you meet the "big guy" behind the desk, there's usually a bravado, a general "gestalt of pride" in that person

that fills the entire office space. I would think this is totally natural. If I ever built a company that employed as many people, fed their families, and fulfilled a service to humanity, I'd stick out my chest too. But there was Ron, sitting behind his desk. Upon seeing me, his eyes were filled with wonder and curiosity. I was amazed to realize that this guy admired *me*. The DNA of that moment has stayed with me. Ron had no ego because it was replaced with something so much bigger: humility.

Ron Spagnardi was one of the most humble people I've ever met. He was also a fine drummer. (A couple of years back he and I, along with *MD* editorial director Bill Miller, spent an afternoon jamming at Ron's house.) Perhaps Ron sometimes wondered how he would've handled better drumming success. A slight change in the roll of the dice, and he could've easily been one of those guys endorsing Slingerland on the back of their catalog in the late '60s. Instead, he created *Modern Drummer* magazine. I hope this was luckier for him. It definitely was luckier for all of *us*.

Bravery

It takes bravery almost beyond my imagining to take all of one's resources and channel them into a new, unknown venture like a magazine. That's exactly what Ron did. (He had a big pair, as they say in Brooklyn.) His wife, Isabel, deserves massive credit as well. For those of you who aren't happily married, there is a higher, more loving, more brave, more everything person that appears when two people are true teammates in a loving relationship. It was obvious to me that the Spagnardis had this quality in their lives.

Ron didn't talk much about himself, and he avoided talking about his illness. My personal guess is that it was his disdain for public sympathy and his desire for privacy that kept him from telling people about the specifics of his cancer. But I do know that within the last few years he had several major operations that caused severe physical distress. But Ron always acted like nothing was wrong, and our conversations were filled with curiosity and intensity. He loved music, he loved drumming, and best yet, he loved *drummers*.

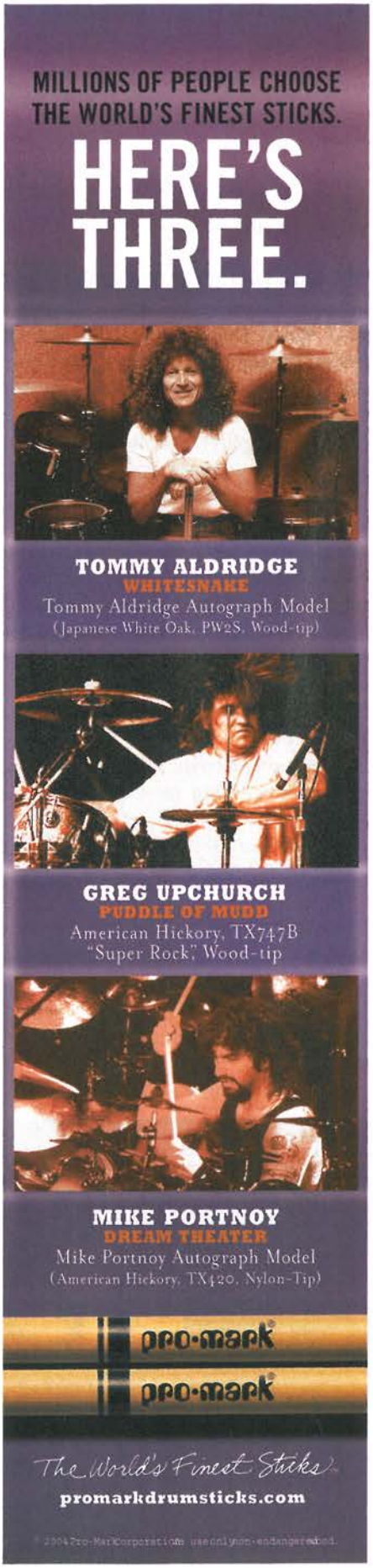
As the last three years passed, I began to experience the kind of admiration for Ron that I had previously held only for Mark Craney. If I felt as poorly as Ron had on some of those days, I would've stayed home and let the staff handle things. But that wasn't his style. He responded by coming to work day in and day out unless he was totally incapacitated.

Ron was very weak these last two years, especially in his lower body. What did he do? He evaluated himself honestly, looked at his options, and acted towards something positive. Remember the series of articles he wrote about a year ago on music theory? This was Ron's new obsession. He began refocusing his efforts on the piano and studying theory! Limited to not being able to play the drums as well as before his illness, his curiosity took over and he continued to grow in another direction. He became so accomplished on piano that he began playing solo gigs at a local café. I'm *awed* by this.

Ron had a voracious appetite for learning and a great work ethic. Bill Miller told me that in the last five years, Ron Spagnardi wrote and published nine method books. To me, these are Leonardo Da Vinci-type numbers! And he never let up. His last editorial, written right before his death, was about encouraging drummers to learn to read music.

I feel certain that every issue of *Modern Drummer* will forever include Ron Spagnardi's handprints. He was a true friend, even a benefactor, to drummers everywhere. And writing this article has reminded me how certain "angels" can help each of us in our drumming and in our lives. I know I will think of Ron and Mark at times of distress and draw courage from them. Hey, it's already happened!

Billy Ward has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne. His book, Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming, *was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications. Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.*



Bob Ezrin

From The Producer's Chair

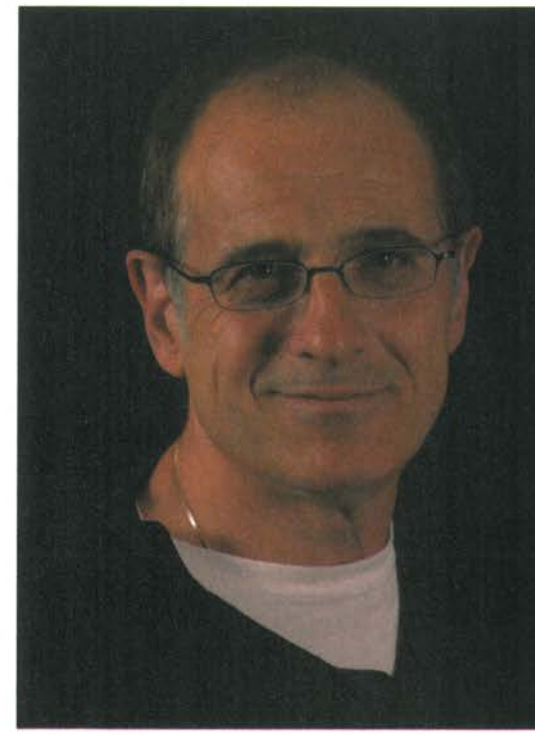
by Gail Worley

Canadian-born studio legend Bob Ezrin has produced great records for thirty years. When pressed, he admits feeling almost destined for a career recording music. Not only was Ezrin's uncle the first private individual in Canada to have a stereo record player, he also owned that country's largest private record collection.

"As a child, while other kids were playing ball, I'd be downstairs at my uncle's house, playing with tape machines and transcription turntables, listening to music, and assimilating the wonders of stereo," Ezrin remembers. "It really piqued my imagination and became part of my life from an early age." For his twelfth birthday, instead of getting a bike, Bob got a tape recorder.

Ezrin gained basic studio recording experience working for CBC television and the University of Toronto's audio/video production department. At the age of eighteen he joined the Nimbus 9 Production Company as Jack Richardson's assistant. "That was my first real job as a music producer, and I had just enough knowledge to be dangerous," Ezrin jokes. "Everything else I gained from being around Jack and asking *lots* of questions."

To hone Ezrin's studio skills, Richardson sent him to the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, where he studied production with Phil Ramone and Dave Green. "That was one of the most wonderful things anyone has ever done for me," Ezrin says. "I must have impressed Phil and Dave, because they took special interest in me. Phil and I are still friends."



Bob produced his first album, Alice Cooper's *Love It To Death*, when he was just nineteen. The record included the group's first hit single, "I'm Eighteen." The chemistry between Ezrin and the band was hot, and he went on to produce the group's *Killer*, *School's Out*, and *Billion Dollar Babies* albums.

Ezrin's success with Alice Cooper led to production gigs on some of the most remarkable albums of the 1970s, including Aerosmith's *Get Your Wings*, KISS's *Destroyer*, Peter Gabriel's eponymous debut, and Pink Floyd's legendary *The Wall*. Over the past three decades, Bob has produced acts as varied as Rod Stewart, Lou Reed, Kula Shaker, and Monster Magnet, along with innumerable film soundtracks and collections. When speaking with him about the many amazingly talented drummers he's known and worked with in his long and colorful career, though, it's best to start at the beginning.

MD: How did working with the Alice Cooper group shape your early career?

Bob: Doing the first two Alice Cooper albums *created* my career. Prior to that, I was just a guy working in a production company in Toronto. When I saw Alice Cooper play in New York City, I knew this band was about something far more important than just rock music. This was the beginning of a cultural movement. I told the band we'd produce them before my bosses had even considered the possibility. [laughs]

When I came back from New York, my bosses were very upset with me. But I was quite determined and excited. I told them, "This will be the most important thing to happen to rock music since its inception. We *have* to do this record." Finally Jack Richardson said, "If you like this so much, *you* do it."

I was lucky to be given an opportunity to put my money where my mouth was and to follow my conviction. I was also fortunate that what I had learned up to then seemed to all be pointed toward that moment. What Alice Cooper needed from a producer was exactly what I had gathered along the way.

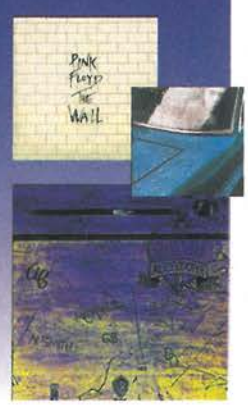
MD: What was Alice Cooper drummer Neal Smith like to work with?

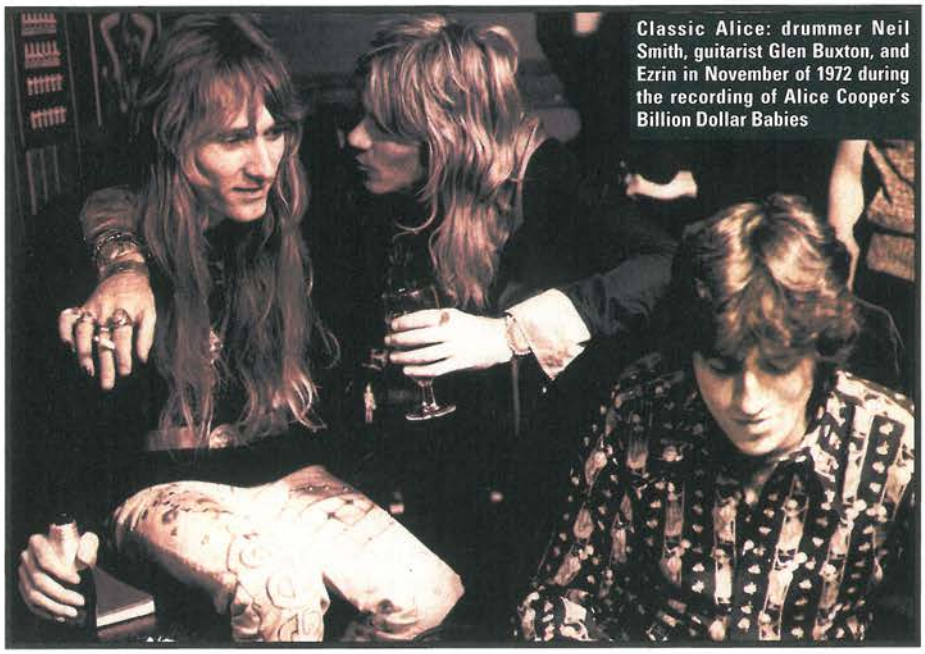
Bob: Neal and I spent days working out the drum parts before we ever got to the studio, so that there was no question of what was going to be played when we did get there. That was the first time I had

Better With Ezrin

Artists whose recordings have benefited from the talents of Bob Ezrin include:

Aerosmith
Alice Cooper
Peter Gabriel
Jane's Addiction
KISS
Pink Floyd
Lou Reed





Classic Alice: drummer Neil Smith, guitarist Glen Buxton, and Ezrin in November of 1972 during the recording of Alice Cooper's Billion Dollar Babies

ever worked like that. Neal showed me how that kind of discipline, singularity of focus, and preparation could make the recording process go *way* quicker. We were able to cut those albums in a very short period of time, because we weren't inventing on the floor. It was just a matter of capturing the performance.

In the studio, Neal was wonderful: tireless, flamboyant, and too egotistical to accept defeat under any circumstances. He was totally up for trying anything weird, even to the extent of trucking his enormous kit of Slingerland drums into the women's bathroom in the RCA records building in Chicago during the

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sessions for *Killer*. [laughs] We recorded the drum tracks for "Halo Of Flies" in there because it was a big space that was also reverberant enough to create the effect we wanted.

MD: Most people familiar with early KISS albums agree that Peter Criss's playing on *Destroyer* is completely different from the drumming on any other KISS album. How did you work with Peter for his performance on that record?

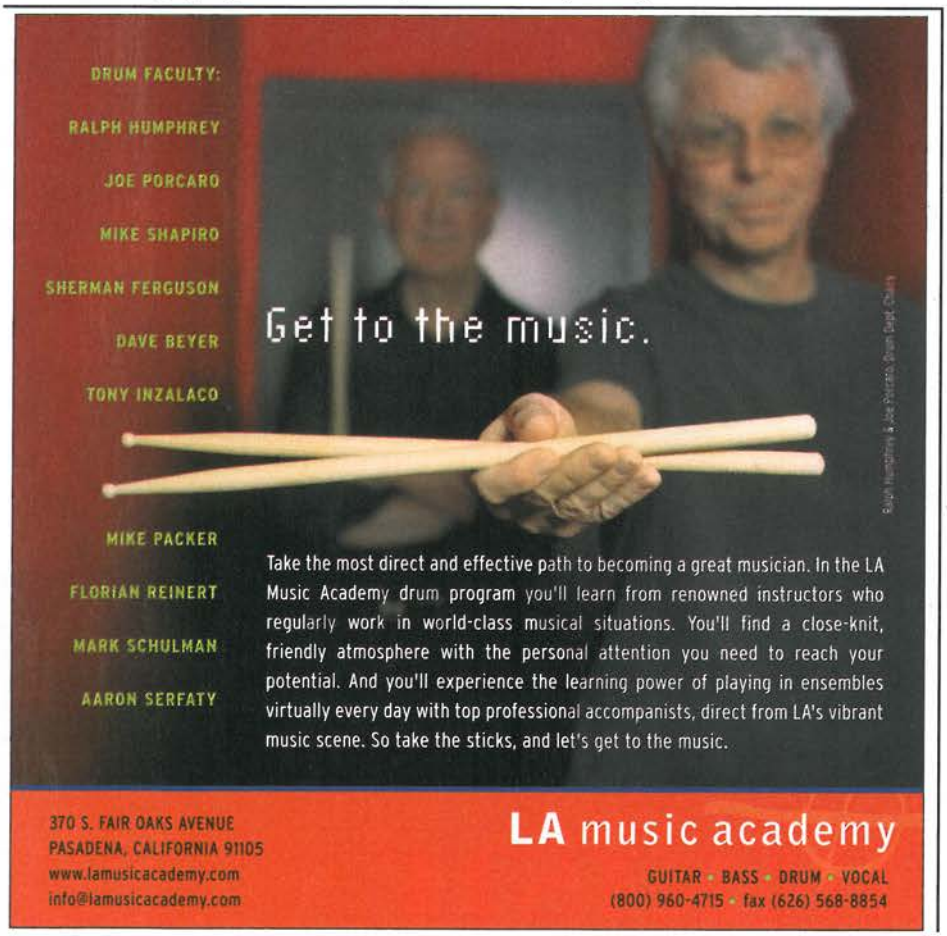
Bob: On *Destroyer* we were attempting something a bit more complicated. There were time changes, layered arrangements, and lots of stuff on that record that was new to the band. It really pushed them past the limits of their playing abilities. Within a few days of beginning rehearsals, they put the instruments down and went to school. I brought in a blackboard and we started with basic rhythm theory, the value of notes, what I meant when I said a triplet, how they sounded and how they were played. I know that sounds really weird. It's certainly *way* beyond what producers would do now. I think one of the things that gave records of that era so much personality was that it *was* the band playing, with all their quirks and idiosyncrasies. That's missing in many cases now. In the case of KISS, we did some schooling, and then we did a lot of really careful drum arranging. There's very little improvisation on *Destroyer*.

MD: One of your major projects in 2003 was Jane's Addiction's comeback album, *Strays*. How was it to work with Stephen Perkins?

Bob: Stephen is an absolutely magnificent drummer and percussionist. He has great technique, but he also has so much soul, and he's incredibly inventive. I love working with him. He's really special.

MD: You worked with Simon Phillips on a couple of projects.

Bob: Simon is a great drummer. We did a live show at Carnegie Hall for Roger Daltrey's fiftieth birthday, which was recorded for an album and for pay-per-view. The other members of The Who joined Roger, along with various guest stars and a large house band with the Juilliard Symphony. Simon was the glue. He's the supreme technician and a great-feeling drummer. We also worked together on a Jeff Beck album that was never finished because the band broke up halfway through the record.



MD: Who are some of your other favorite drummers?

Bob: I've been fortunate to work with many amazing drummers. I was lucky to work with BJ Wilson before he died. I think BJ was a groundbreaking drummer. The work he did with Procol Harum really opened up a whole new way of looking at drums.

I never got to work with Hal Blaine, who was a hero of mine. That's something I regret. I *have* worked with Jim Keltner, Kenny Aronoff, Vinnie Colaiuta, Aynsley Dunbar—who was one of the true greats on a kit—and some other terrific drummers.

I didn't get to work with John Bonham, but I did work with his son Jason. He's also pretty special. I think a lot of the talent in that family is genetic. Jason has this visceral feel for the beat that's very like his dad's, and that's something you can't teach a small child. Jason also has a similar sense of power to his father.

Speaking of famous progeny, Zak Starkey is a great drummer. After I did the Roger Daltrey project, Roger put together a touring band with Zak as the drummer. I came into a rehearsal where Zak was playing, and I was very impressed. He brings another dimension to The Who altogether.

MD: Speaking of The Who, did you ever get a chance to work with Keith Moon?

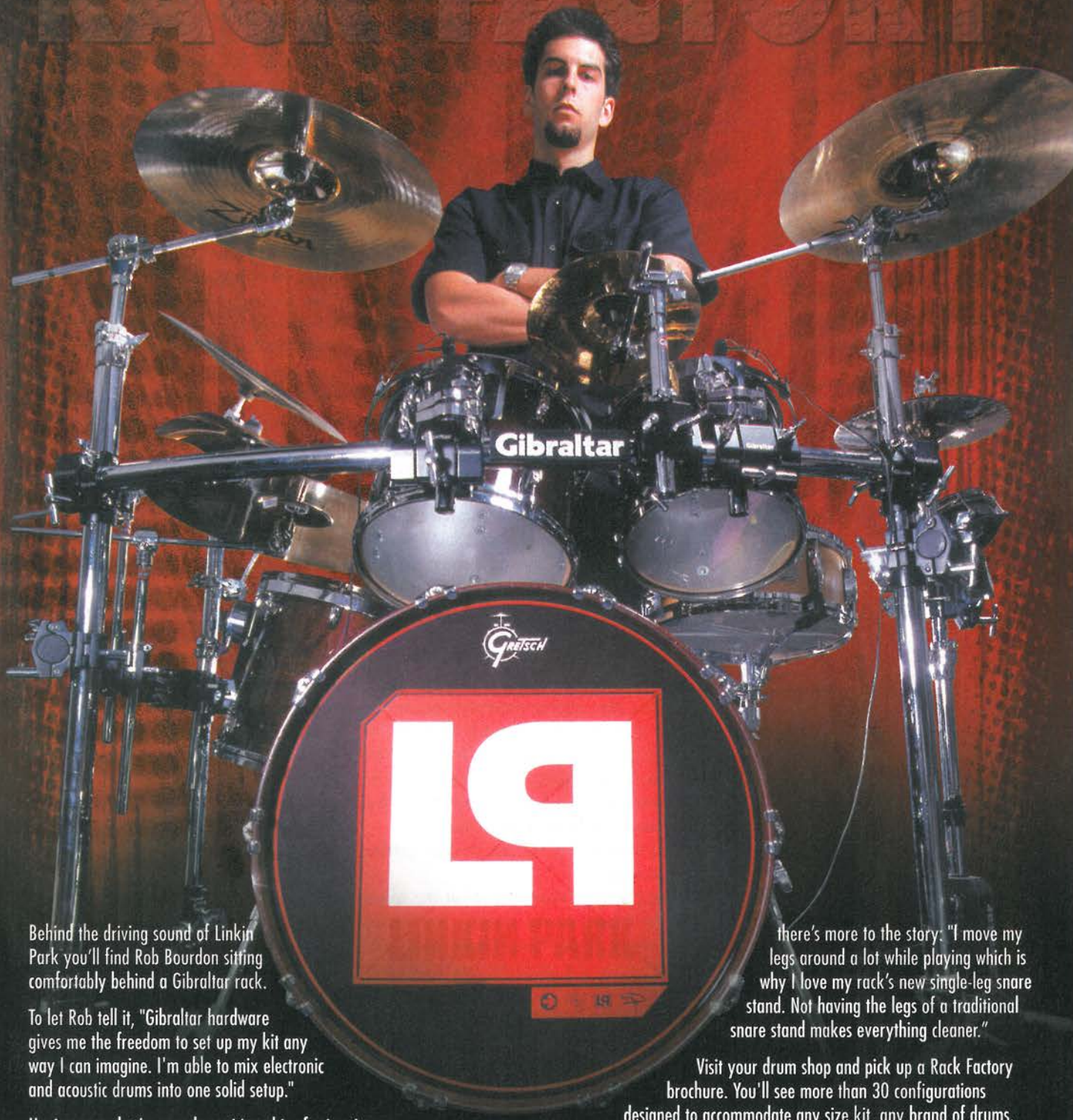
Bob: I had the pleasure of knowing Keith, but we never worked together. What Keith brought to The Who—more than just the theatrical lead drumming he'd perform, on their recordings and live—was a spirit and energy that helped fuel the group. Keith had such a huge affect on all of them. He really was the emotional glue of the band. When he died, the bottom fell out of their universe. Roger continues to work on developing a tribute to Keith.

While I was still a teenager, I worked for a band that opened for The Who at the Coliseum in Toronto. The stage was very low, and being on the same floor with The Who was a magical experience. To be standing there when they hit the stage in such a small venue was *unbelievable*.

MD: Getting back to your studio experiences, how long do you like to spend on getting drum tracks?

Bob: I like to get them pretty quickly. I don't want my drummer playing more

Rob Bourdon.
The driving force behind Linkin Park.



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than three or four takes of anything to get the performance, unless he or she is really challenged and has to go section by section. That's how we did it with Stephen Perkins, because he's such a great player and a quick study. We'd do three or four takes, then he'd go home and listen to that performance overnight. The next day he'd come back in and do a better one—usually before anyone else even showed up at the studio. And it would be brilliant.

MD: Do you have favorite rooms or spaces for recording drums in?

Bob: I used to really like isolated booths, though I haven't used one in a very long time. I've been thinking lately about going back to doing that. It makes for a tighter, more controlled drum sound. Then you can apply effects and different types of controlled ambiance to create whatever environment you feel you need around the drums.

Generally, though, I just go back into a normal, natural-sounding room and record there. That's always the best environment. The more natural the sound, the more flexibility you have. We've recorded in some pretty strange places over the years, including loading bays, alleys, and strange live hallways. I like live areas for certain kinds of drum sounds, but I think what's most important is to find a room that the drums like, and that likes the drums. It's also very important to find the place in the room where the drums "speak" the best, where you get the most clarity, power, and density at the same time. A place that's too live has certain inherent limitations, such as when the sound folds over on itself and you get cancellations, weird phase relationships, and a kind of reverberance that you can't control. That becomes a difficult thing to mix.

MD: How hands-on are you in getting drum sounds?

Bob: I'm very hands-on about the sound of the drums during mixing. But during recording, it depends. Under many circumstances, I'll place the mic's and tune the drums myself. Lately, though, I've been working with some great people like [producer/engineer] Brian Virtue. I worked with Brian on the Jane's record, and I didn't have to do much of anything. We picked the kit and the area of the room we liked, discussed what kinds of mic's we were going to put up, and *bingo*, there it was. We didn't do a huge amount of EQing, either.

MD: Do you have preferences for certain drums or drumheads?

Bob: I love DW drums these days, and I love a great Ludwig kit when I can find one. We trucked out an old Rogers for some of the Jane's stuff, and it sounded brilliant. I also love Slingerland, which we used for the Alice Cooper albums. I think most of the higher-end drum manufacturers come up with great-sounding kits from time to time, and it's really a matter of finding one. As far as heads go, they have a tremendous amount to do with the playing style of the drummer and the sound that one is targeting. The good news about heads is that there are so many different kinds. Consequently, simply changing heads can produce many different effects.

MD: Do you record everything?

Bob: Very often we're working with people who are ultra-prepared, so it's not an improvisational situation at all. In that case, we just go for getting the take. If we're writing on the floor or experimenting, then it's a case of recording everything. One thing I *can* say is that every time the song rolls, we're in "record." Once in a while I'll say, "Let's run it from the top and see what we've got." Then I'll turn to the engineer and say, "Play that back," and he'll tell me we weren't recording. My advice to anyone working in a studio is that the record light should *always* be on. You lose nothing when you record, especially in the digital world.

MD: You've been producing records for over thirty years. How have you changed as a producer since the '70s?

Bob: I go into every situation with a strong focus, a personal level of enthusiasm and commitment to the band, and an artistic and professional commitment to the music. I almost feel like I'm reinventing the wheel every single time. I often wish I had "The Bob Ezrin Method." That would make life a lot simpler, and I'd get a lot more records done. But I approach every project in its own way, adapting to whatever is required for that particular record. I may have a few more tools at my disposal these days, but in that sense I haven't changed since I started doing this.

I'm just thankful to wake up every morning and realize that I get to do music as opposed to asking, "Would you like fries with that, sir?" Getting paid to do something I've loved all my life is a major blessing.

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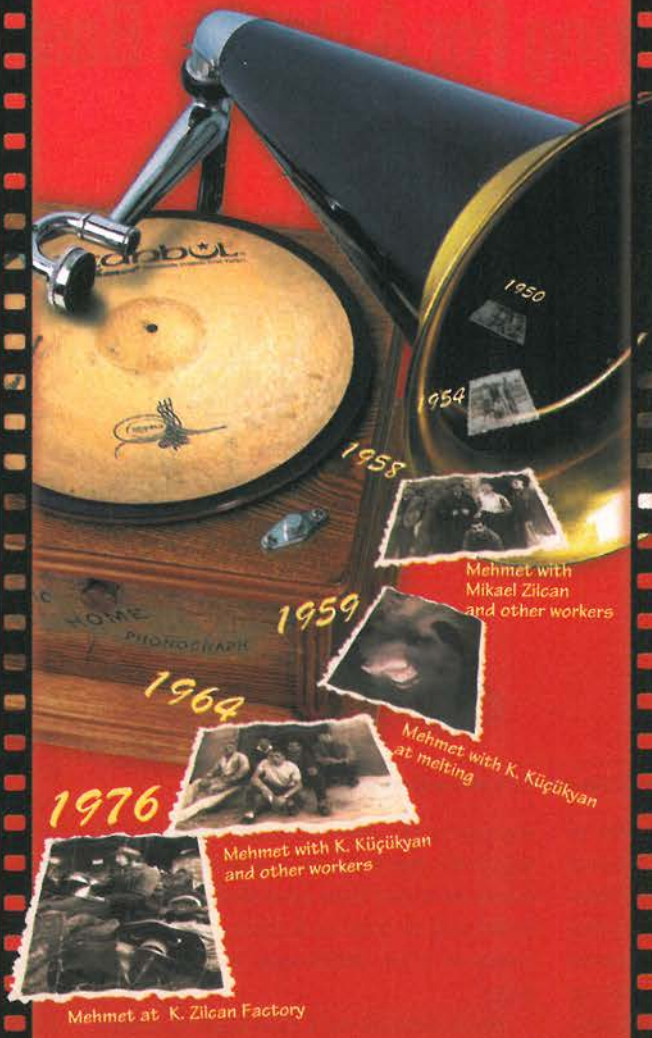

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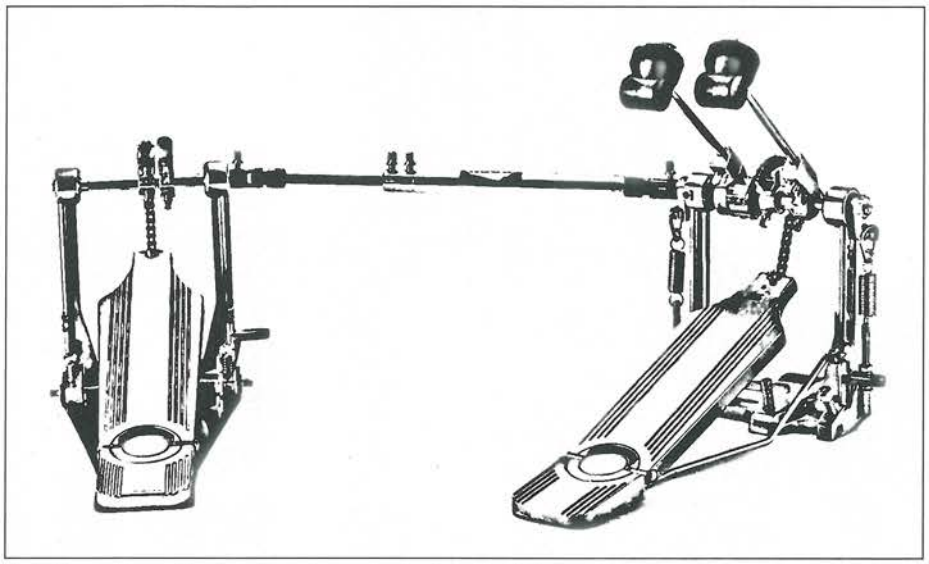
Preparing For A Double Bass Pedal

by Larry T. Kennedy



A double pedal can offer lots of creative musical options. But it also requires preparation on your part.

I've been tempted for some time now to purchase a double bass drum pedal, and thereby put my left foot to better use than simply playing hi-hat on 2 and 4. The fact that several name-brand manufacturers have released double pedals that sell for around $200 has made this move even easier to justify.

However, before you decide to move on to a double bass pedal, you'd be well-advised to determine just why it is you want one. Do you plan to play thrash or speed metal? Do you want to play more complex bass drum figures? Knowing exactly what you wish to accomplish will help you to make a better investment of time and money.

Getting Started

Pad Or Silencers. Just like our early drumming studies, double bass playing often requires hours of monotonous practice. You'll want to keep your initial efforts to yourself as much as possible, in order to avoid disturbing your family and neighbors. If you don't already own a practice-pad kit or silencers for your drums, obtaining one or the other is an excellent way to begin. It's much easier to hear what you're doing on a pad than on a drum. You'll be better able to hear each stroke and thus be aware of slight differences in volume and time.

An alternative to a full-scale practice-pad kit are stand-alone bass drum pads offered by several manufacturers. While not as "complete" as the full kits, these pads do allow you to practice your bass drum technique in relative silence.

Metronome. If you don't already own a metronome, you should definitely purchase one. Many of us use our hi-hat foot as a sort of metronome by marking time on 2 and 4 or in quarter notes. With this reference point gone, it's easier to speed up or slow down. Practicing with a metronome is invaluable for keeping strokes clean, even, and in tempo.

I use a small clip-on metronome from Seiko that cost me less me than $25. I attach it to a music stand, where it also comes in handy for holding thick method books open to the correct page.

A Good Throne. I strongly recommend a throne with a motorcycle-style seat and a backrest. When playing a single bass drum pedal, most of us use the left foot as a balance point. If we play "heel up," we have two balance points—the throne and the left foot on the hi-hat pedal. When *both* heels are up, we're left with only the throne as a balance point. A larger throne with a backrest also helps support the back and hips.

Hi-Hat With Movable Legs. If you don't already own one, you'll probably need to buy a hi-hat stand with legs that move, so that you can place the left pedal closer to the hi-hat. Fortunately, this feature has become more common, even on low- to mid-priced models. There are also two-legged stands that use the pedal footboard as the third "leg." In addition, you'll want a drop clutch that will allow you to drop the top hi-hat cymbal into the closed position for double-bass playing, and then pick it back up again automatically when you want to operate the hi-hat again.

A temporary practice alternative for a hi-hat with movable legs is turning the stand so that the hi-hat pedal faces away from

Bass drum practice pads, like this Gibraltar model, can help you develop your double pedal technique quietly.

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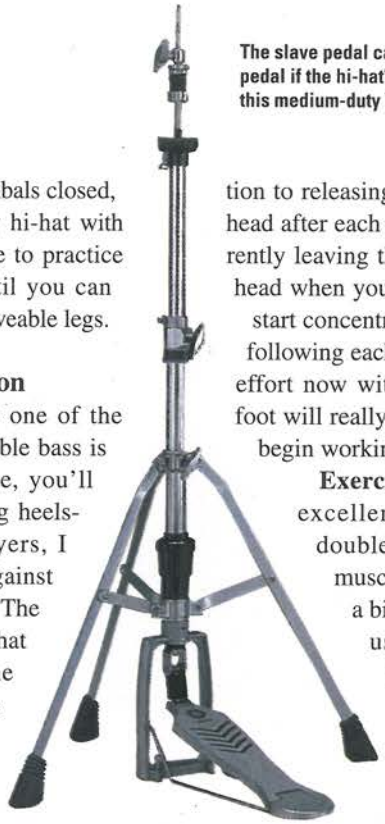

The slave pedal can be positioned closer to the hi-hat pedal if the hi-hat's tripod can rotate. Many hi-hats—like this medium-duty Yamaha HS 740—have this feature.

you. You'll have to drop the cymbals closed, and you won't be able to play hi-hat with your foot. But you will be able to practice on your bass drum pedals until you can afford to buy that stand with moveable legs.

Physical Preparation

Heel-Up Technique. Since one of the primary reasons to take up double bass is to increase power and volume, you'll likely want to consider playing heels-up. Like many heels-up players, I used to leave the beater up against the head at the end of a stroke. The problem with this method is that leaving one beater against the head as the other one strikes will reduce the volume and resonance of the second stroke. Pay very close attention to releasing the beater from the head after each stroke. If you're currently leaving the beater against the head when you play a single pedal, start concentrating on lifting it off following each stroke. Making this effort now with your single-pedal foot will really help later when you begin working with both pedals.

Exercise. Bicycling is an excellent way to train for double bass playing. The muscles used in pedaling a bike are the same ones used in the heels-up bass drum stroke. Actually, any exercise that strengthens your lower back muscles and hips is advised. Joining a gym and working on your back, leg, and hip muscles will help you to build endurance and control for double pedal playing.

Play Left-Footed. Try playing a song or two left-footed on your single pedal during your practice sessions. This means moving your left foot over to the bass drum pedal, and playing the time on your ride cymbal or some other conveniently reachable surface. This will strengthen the muscles on your left side, while also improving your independence.

Develop Left-Hand Hi-Hat Rides. Work on developing your ability to play hi-hat rides with your left hand. It's much easier to balance with both heels up when playing in this "open" manner than it is when crossing the right hand over the left to reach the hi-hat. While it may take a while to be able to play this way, I still recommend developing the technique.

Practice Materials. There are plenty of books and videos available on the subject of double bass drum technique. Among these are *The Encyclopedia Of Double Bass Drumming*, by Bobby Rondinelli and Michael Lauren, and *Double Bass Drumming* by Joe Franco. I've also discovered that good ol' *Stick Control*, by George Lawrence Stone, is excellent for developing bass-drum technique, even though it was written primarily for the hands. Simply practice the exercises as directed, using your feet instead of your hands.

Any time and effort you put into expanding your ability in the area of double pedal playing will certainly make you a better all-around drummer. And who knows, some day you may even dazzle the audience and your bandmates with that wicked double bass fill you've always wanted to pull off!

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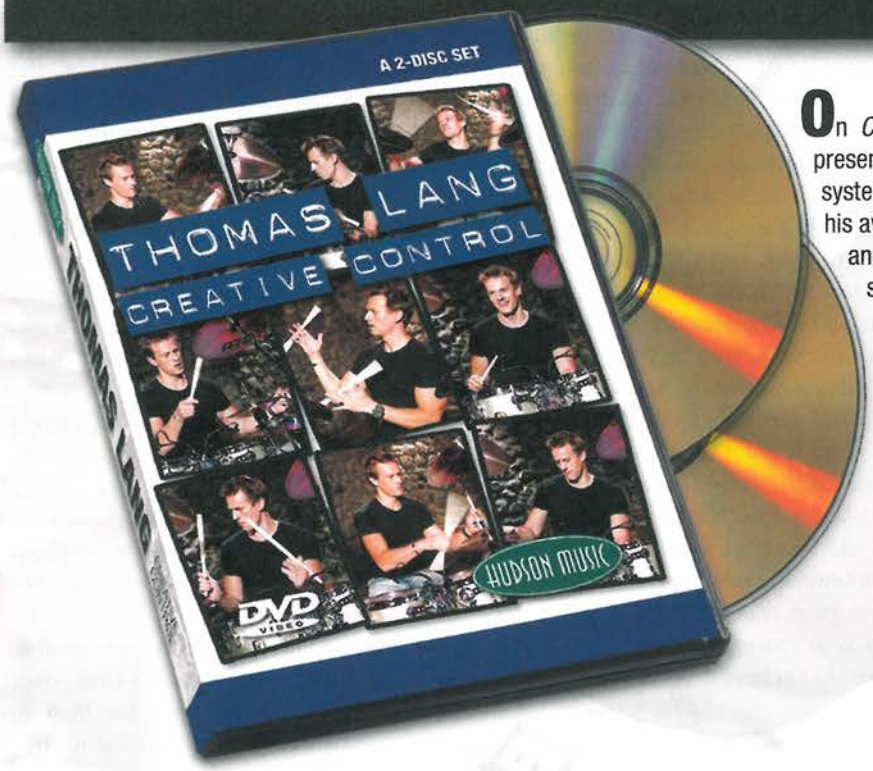

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Working With A Conductor

Part 2: Making It Happen

by Tommy Igoe

In last month's action-packed installment, we followed the exploits of a rock-solid drummer, who, when confronted with the harsh reality of playing under the baton of a conductor for the first time, withered into a mushy pile of self-doubt in about five seconds. While fictitious, that story was based in truth, and served to illustrate the potential consequences of being unprepared when a musical curveball is heaved in your direction.

For example, I clearly remember the summer of the "Lame Piano-Playing Music Director Who Expected Me To Follow The Tempo By Watching His Fat Bouncing Butt." Ah yes, one of my personal favorites from years gone by. I can't fathom why music schools don't offer a course for that essential skill. They could call it *Tushy Tempo Adventures.* Hmmm, perhaps a new book? As I've often said, having the ability to follow a conductor is a great skill to add to your musical toolbox. As orchestras and various ensembles continue to explore more contemporary rock, pop, and jazz literature, there is a true need for what I like to call "the conductable drummer."

By and large, most drummers are not conductable, simply because of the ingrained methodology referred to as *good time*. A conducted setting can throw the concept of good time on its head, and a proficient drummer can sound hopelessly lost if the concept of what makes time *good* isn't revised.

It's helpful to remember that conductors and drummers really need each other in order to make the music work. My friend Joe Church, who is the musical director of *The Lion King*, offers a great analogy that I think helps clarify the relationship. He says, "I'm the captain, and you are my engineer. I steer the ship, and you make it go. Without you, I can't move. Without me, you can't see where you're going. We need each other."

Drummers and conductors have another deep bond. There are more musician jokes with us as the punch line than all others combined. We have to stick together!

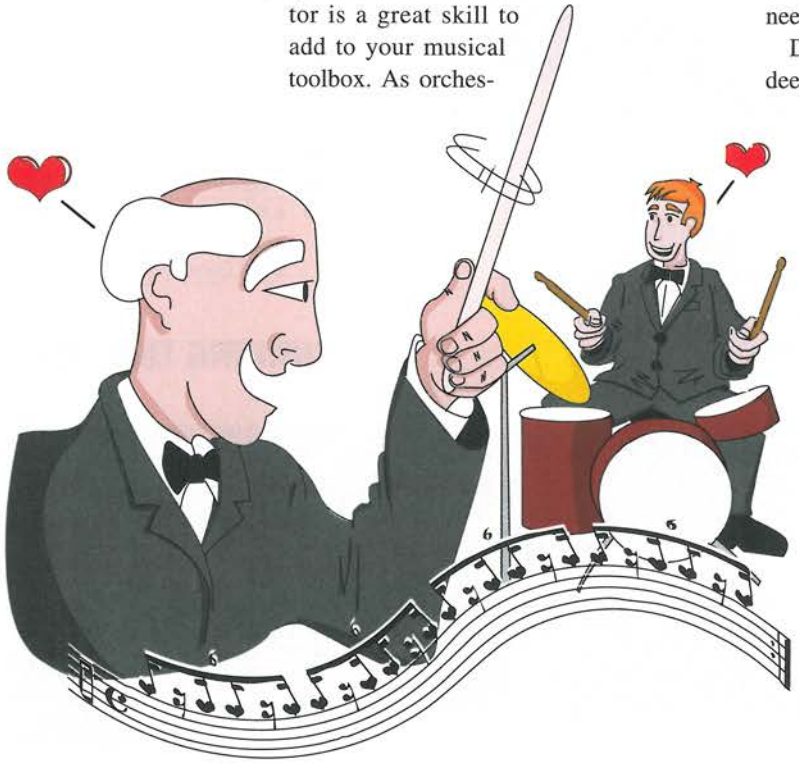


Illustration by Joseph King

It's good to remember that conductors and drummers really need each other in order to make the music work.

Out of everything I've seen from behind and in front of a drumset, nothing frustrates my musical brethren more than trying to follow a conductor (except, perhaps, smirking female vocalists who *insist* on playing cowbell on every song, including jazz ballads). I've seen musicians literally cry, quit, and swear never to return after a bad performance with a conductor. I've witnessed "First-Call Snobby Studio Punks" reduced to quivering Jell-O by good conductors who were not impressed with their pedigree. I've viewed the crème de la crème of touring drummers—just off the road with the biggest names in pop/rock—unceremoniously discharged after one performance, and asked never to return. Conversely, I've seen average drummers carve out very nice relationships with conductors because of their ability to navigate musical waters with deft and class, leading to unbelievably vast pools of employment. There is a lesson to be learned here, so let's get to it.

Note: For readability, I'll be referring to conductors in the masculine "he." However, there are many excellent female conductors, and their numbers are growing all the time.

Getting To The Core

Like anything else you do behind a set of drums, working for a conductor deserves to have a *core philosophy*. If you were a private student of mine, you'd be hearing that term over and over again. In the often-baffling world of music, having a simple core philosophy can help you to keep your eyes on the prize and avoid distractions. A core philosophy is a guiding light amid a confusing matrix of sound, attitudes, and advice.

A simple example of a core philosophy would be to imagine you are playing an old-school R&B/funk gig, performing classic tunes like "Brick House" and "September." Your core philosophy for that gig would be along the lines of "Simple. Solid. Deep pocket." No matter what else happens, if you stick to those simple ideas on your gig, you increase your chances of success exponentially. In a moment we'll take that idea and apply it to a conducted situation. But first, here's a simple truth: If you don't know the rules of the game, you can't play. Let's make a broad list of do's and don'ts that will cover the basics of what you'll need to know and what to avoid if faced with a conductor.

Do's

Set your drums up logically, so that you can see the conductor and your music with only the slightest head movement.

Keep your eyes on the conductor. Not some of the time, but *all* of the time.

Concentrate, especially during rests. Don't be ashamed to count through them to maintain your place in the flow of the music. Professionals *always* count.

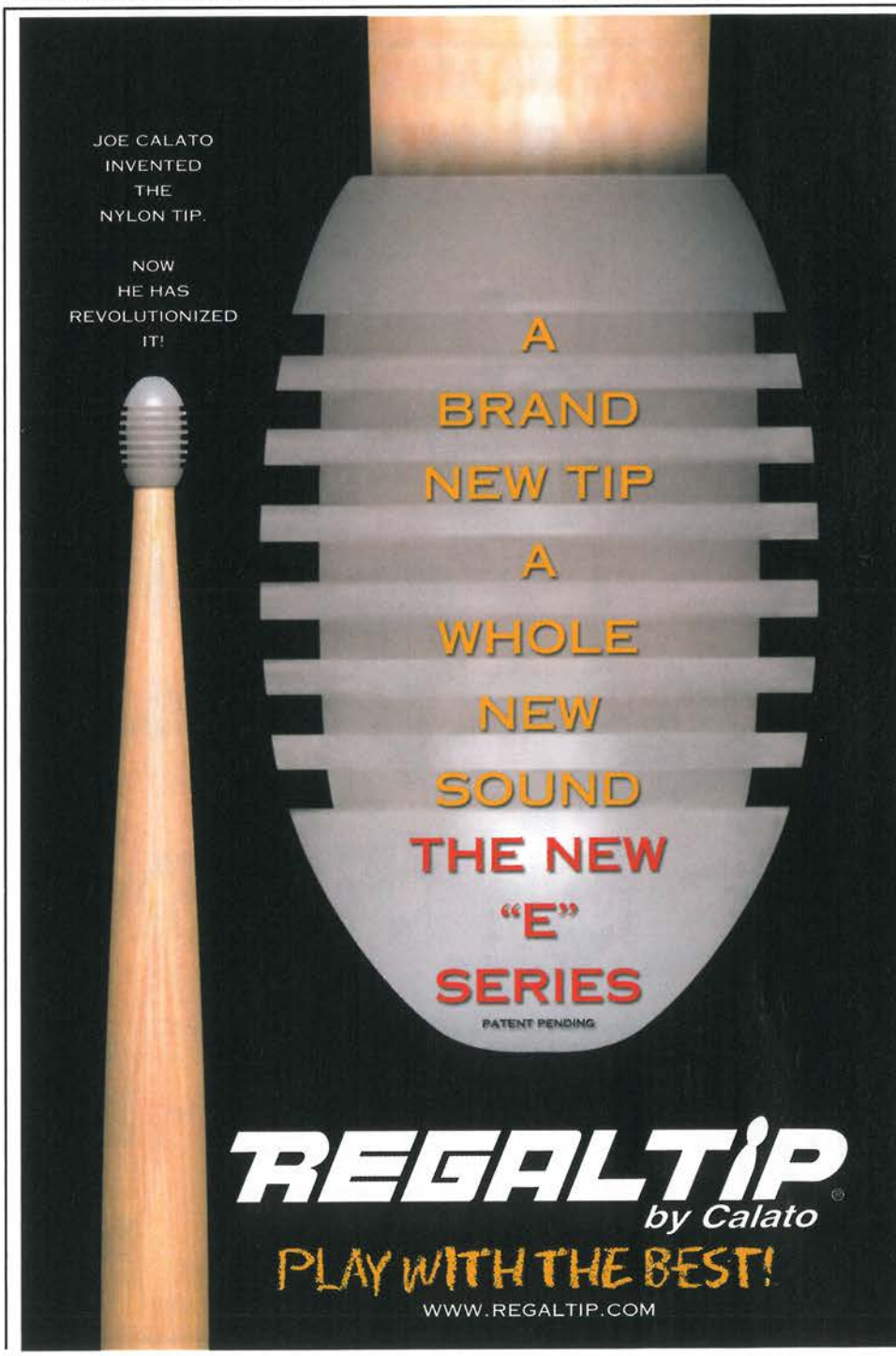
Be sensitive to the ensemble.

Quickly learn your conductor's motions. Conductors all have their own "look" and stroke, especially when they want things faster or slower. So be observant.

Be stylistically appropriate *within* your situation. For example, you generally can't hit the drums as hard in an orchestra as you can in a band.

Be aware that the conductor may change his mind about dynamics, tempo, or anything at all.

Take nothing for granted, be ready



for anything.

Have all the necessary musical implements within easy and quiet reach.

Learn quickly. While we all make mistakes, do not make the same one twice.

Play with confidence. *Never* play afraid.

Check your ego at the door.

Don'ts

Don't keep your face buried in your music.

Don't try to teach the conductor the "correct" tempo.

Don't be obnoxious and loud. Gauge your surroundings!

Don't be afraid. Conductors smell fear like a hungry wild bear.

Don't make your time immovable. Conductors need our help, so don't be a burden.

Don't start rewriting your parts without an invitation from the conductor.

Don't offer unsolicited advice.

Don't make stupid mistakes. Conductors will hate you. Really.

Talk About It...Or Not

By synopsizing the key points of these little lists, we can quickly assemble a nice, simple core philosophy: "Watch closely. Be responsive. Learn quickly." Those three little gems are the core philosophy I've used for every conducted situation I've ever been in. No matter what trouble you might find yourself in with a conductor, those concepts will help to keep you calm and focused on the task at hand.

Let's add one more tidbit to our core philosophy: Ask questions. It sounds like such a simple thing, but it's amazing how we don't do it. It's like asking for directions at a gas station. We'd rather drive around lost for an hour than suffer the embarrassment of admitting *(gasp!)* that we actually need some help. I've found that conductors are extremely receptive and helpful when asked specific questions about how to best approach a section of music. Good conductors know what they want, and good drummers want to give it to them. As a result, you'll find good conductors and drummers discussing the finer points of a piece all the time.

Amazingly, I've also found that the best conductors aren't afraid to admit when *they* don't know something. If the conductor isn't sure about what he wants the drums to do, he may ask you to create something appropriate. You know you're starting to cultivate a good relationship with a conductor when he trusts you to make stuff up that works better than what's already written.

That said, for goodness' sake, *don't* start lecturing the conductor on the necessities of "adhering to a 2:3 clave pattern with the cascara while the bass drum plays the tumbao only on the 2 side of the bar while mildly superimposing a guaguanco with your free limb...." Nobody cares—especially the conductor. For all you know, at that moment he might be obsessed with figuring out why the flutes can't play together. So don't talk about it, just *do* it. He'll let you know if he doesn't like it.

Soft Time

Okay, I must be crazy, but I'm now going to give up my personal super-secret to guarantee that your conductor will fall in love with you:

As drummers, we're bred on a steady diet of "being solid," "having rock-hard time," "hard-driving swing," "*Grrrr*...bring

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Photo by Martin Cohen

me more rocks to eat!" You get the picture. Indeed, no drummer aspires to hear after a gig, "Man, your time was soft. You really moved it all over the place." That *would* be a bummer, and it's not the kind of softness I mean. There is a way to move tempos to fit a conductor's wishes, while still maintaining solidity. So let's clear something up right away: *soft* time in no way means *weak* time.

Remember that this a conceptual issue, not a musical one. If you approach time in a conducted setting as being "hard," then you'll simply be an immovable object. If a conductor wanted that, he'd hire a drum machine. Instead, if you are called on to play a groove while being conducted, keep your time *soft* while you keep the groove *deep*. There are several ways to do this. I'll offer the three that are the easiest to grasp and implement.

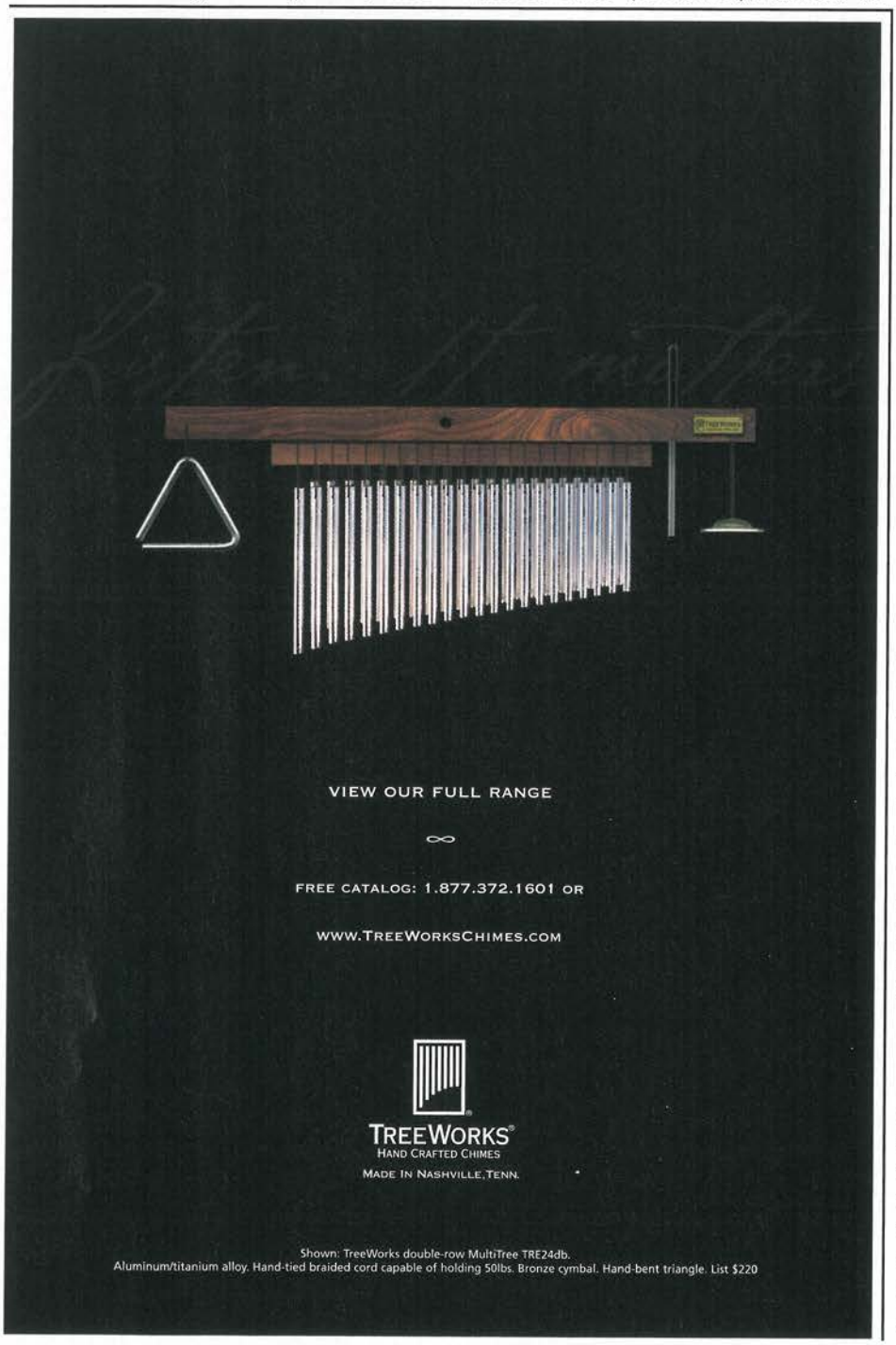
The first way is to make a *definitive decision* to move the time to where you think the conductor wants it. Don't be wishy-washy about it. If you think he wants it faster (or slower), then do it. Watch him closely for signs of satisfaction or frustration. Usually, only small incremental moves are needed; don't overshoot your (*his!*) goal tempo. This concept of definitive movement is essential to maintaining overall solidity in any ensemble. A bass player can stay with you easier if you make a clear tempo move, rather than if you go fishing for the right tempo over several bars. Half-hearted tempo adjustments are groove killers.

The second way is more technical. When you decide to move the time, move it on the *entire drumset*, not just on one or two limbs. I know it sounds crazy, but I've seen this bizarre phenomenon happen often. The conductor is showing a downbeat earlier than you're playing it, so you decide to play faster. But you only move the downbeat (usually on the bass drum). The rest of the kit lags behind, creating a groove-less vortex of rhythmic chaos. Avoid this at all costs, because if you get the one limb correct (and the others not), you'll sound horrible. If you're playing a groove, move the whole groove, with all the parts *together*, to the new tempo.

The third way is the most important. Think *fluidly* about your time. Stay out of tempo ruts. Remember that you aren't playing in a "band" now. The big picture must be kept in mind. Don't become attached to what *you* think is the right tempo, because you then become resistant to the changes that conductors invariably want to make. Conductors reserve the right to change their minds, whether you like it or not. So I avoid thinking about "right and wrong" whenever possible. I think about trying to make the grooves as deep and comfortable as I can within the parameters of the conductor's stroke. Sometimes that's really hard to do, especially with "rhythmically challenged" conductors. But honestly, I've found that staying mentally fluid helps in even the most aggravating situations.

How Do You Learn It?

I get a lot of questions—especially from college graduates who are suddenly thrust into the shrinking abyss of the music business—about how I became successful with conductors. I honestly don't have a clear-cut answer. It always came very naturally to me. However, I did a few things early on that helped me fit into various ensemble environments, and these I can share.



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Working With Conductors

The first thing I did was participate in the band program at school. I'm very hardcore about this for students serious about a career in music. As a matter of fact, I won't accept any high school–age private students unless they're in their school band—period.

Band is probably the first taste any young musician gets of functioning in a large ensemble and following a conductor. It's priceless training that serves every other aspect of your musical existence. If your local band director is great, then good for you. Think of how much you'll learn. But if your band director stinks, that's even better. You'll be ahead of the game if and when you're confronted with a bad conductor in a professional situation.

Just remember, no matter how bad you think your band director is, I guarantee he knows more than you do. The point is: Take every chance you can to learn music from every possible source. Check your ego at the door and jump in.

Did you miss out on your high-school opportunity? There are many community orchestras that would love some help in the percussion section. Getting out there and falling on your face a few times in that setting is a great idea.

Most community orchestras are made up of local semi-pros who have, for one reason or another, left the full-time music scene. There is often a lot of great talent in these ensembles. And I've found them to be extremely friendly and welcoming to new musicians learning the ropes. You might play triangle on one piece and bass drum on another. Each instrument presents its own musical challenge, thereby providing a perfect training ground for your later experiences in a conducted setting. The most important thing is that you'll be watching and interpreting a conductor's motion.

One other thing I did that really helped was to study classical piano. While nobody is going to mistake me for a concert pianist, just learning some basic piano literature with a good teacher is time well spent for any musician. I learned so much more than just the harmonic and melodic principles involved. I learned how differently other musicians approach rhythm and time. When you start to understand how other musicians relate to music, you can speak to them in their own language, instead of seeing everything from a drum-centric viewpoint.

Ah, if only our intrepid hero from last month's article had read this month's before he experienced his conductor-inflicted nightmare. Hopefully, I got to you in time. Keep a few of these ideas in mind when the situation arises, and you should be fine. Interpreting a conductor is one of those skills that some drummers assimilate immediately, while others have a harder time. There is only one way to find out how you'll do, and that's to jump in.

Of course, you may think that you're never going to work with a conductor. And you may be right. But then again (*cue Darth Vader breathing...*), you may be wrong.

Tommy Igoe is the drummer and assistant conductor for Broadway's Tony- and Grammy-award winning The Lion King. *See www.TommyIgoe.com for more information.*

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Mark Mondesir
Drums

Dennis said "Mark is probably one of the greatest drummers of our time", to those in the know Mark is one of the most talked about drummers on the international scene. He's played with John Mclaughlin, Jeff Beck, John Scofield, Joe Zawinul, with artists as diverse as Bryan Ferry to the BBC Big Band. On this DVD you'll witness some of the most superhuman and musical drumming played with complete ease. For those that have ears to hear let them hear what all the fuss is about.

Michael Mondesir
Bass

Michael is the bass player of choice for many of the worlds top drummers, he's played with Billy Cobham, Lenny White, Trilok Gurtu, Bernard Purdie, Ginger Baker, but when he plays with his brother Mark you'll witness an unearthly musical relationship many have described as musical telepathy.

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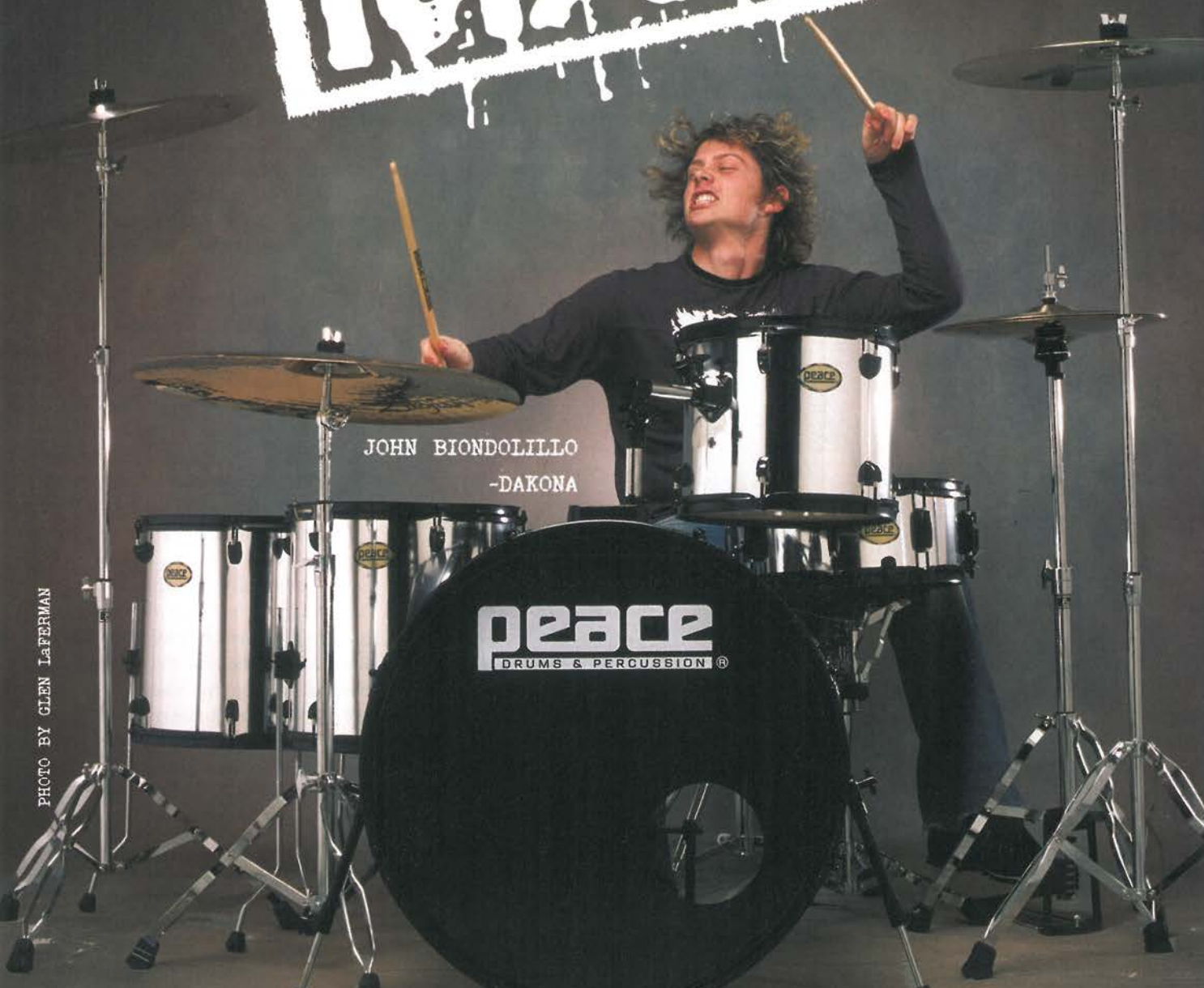

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Drums By CenterStaging

Service To The Stars

by Rick Long

Have you ever seen your favorite drummer performing live on television and wondered how his or her drums got to the gig? Have you checked the tour schedule and found that the drummer was on tour one day in the Midwest, in LA the next day for a television taping, and then back on the road the day after? Of course, professional drummers often do have multiple drumsets. But chances are good that the kit you saw on TV probably came from an LA-based company called CenterStaging.

The CenterStaging drum crew includes (standing, from left) department manager Nissim Aharon, John Lord, Nick Siewart, Jake Volez, and kneeling, Brent Barnett. (John's dog Girl is an honorary member.)

CenterStaging provides musical instrument rentals—especially drumkits—to the television industry. They also provide rental kits for their impressive in-house rehearsal facilities. And while their list of clients is confidential, we *can* tell you that it includes the top echelon of the music business, along with all the major TV shows and studios.

Jan Parent and Johnny Caswell (former employees of S.I.R., another large sound company in LA) founded CenterStaging in 1984. The company has grown to service most of the television industry. Their facility has ten large rehearsal rooms, five rehearsal/production studios, and a massive television sound stage. A recording studio is under construction. An equally large East Coast facility is located in Philadelphia.

The company is involved in backline amplification and television production sound. But if the amount of gear in their new 9,000-square-foot drum department indicates anything, drumsets are their forte. They have racks and racks of drum and percussion equipment from almost every manufacturer, large and small. This is primarily due to the fact that by servicing CenterStaging, manufacturers can get their equipment in front of millions of viewers without having to pay exorbitant advertising fees.

Getting The Gear Out There

Here's how it works: A drum company will typically send CenterStaging at least one set of drums. But this is not your basic four-piece rig. It includes every available size of bass drum, tom, and snare, all in a single color. In this way, no matter what size kit is requested by the artist, CenterStaging can provide that setup. Hardware and cymbals are done the same way. When a contract comes in, the gear is pulled from the racks, heads are replaced if they appear worn at all, and everything goes into a road case for quick delivery.

"Quick" is often the name of the game. While *MD* was visiting the company for this story, a call came in for a full percussion setup for a Jennifer Lopez video shoot in Brazil. Time of the call: 11:00 A.M. Time they needed to pick it up: 2:00 P.M. Needless to say, part of the interview was conducted while John Lord, who was then director of the percussion department, was running around pulling percussion gear.

Nissim Aharon, who recently took over John's role as drum department director, can often be found replacing heads and tuning the drums. (John still works with the drum department part-time, but has been promoted to show department manager.) To say that Nissim is fast—and good—is an understatement. As an example, he replaced and perfectly tuned the heads on a five-piece kit while carrying on a conversation with three other people for this interview.

Nick Siewart, Jake Volez, and Brent Barnett round out the crew. They can be found most days packing up drums and heading for any one of the many studios in the LA/Burbank area.

CenterStaging can provide virtually any brand and model of drumkit imaginable.

A call came in for a full percussion setup for a Jennifer Lopez video shoot in Brazil. Time of the call: 11:00 A.M. Time they needed to pick it up: 2:00 P.M.

Snare drums and hand-percussion instruments can also be supplied.

Pedals to suit any drummer's taste and technique can accompany each kit.

Each kit is fitted with drumheads of the player's choice, then carefully tuned.

The prepared kit is cased and ready to be trucked to an LA TV studio for an appearance before millions of viewers.

Special Needs

This crew *knows* drum equipment, including nuances that might not occur to the rest of us. For example, they like today's synthetic conga heads a lot, because those heads hold their tuning in varying temperatures better than natural skin heads do. This is very important in TV studios. For example, the set for *The Tonight Show* is kept at 60° during the 11:00 A.M. soundcheck. This is done because when they turn up the lights to tape the show at 5:00 P.M., the temperature climbs quickly and dramatically. Natural-skin conga heads that were tuned during soundcheck would go out of tune before the band could complete their portion of the live taping.

The Best Of Times And The Worst Of Times

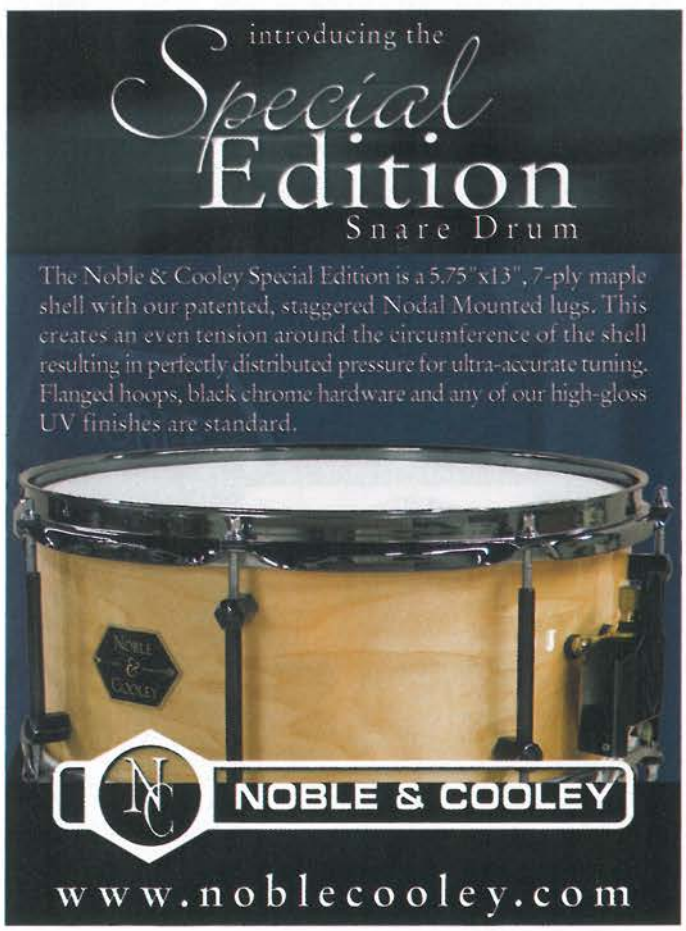
When we asked the CenterStaging drum crew to tell us about their favorite gig, John Lord said it was getting the contract for the Grammies. They had been vying for that gig for some time, and eventually they were given the Latin Grammy Show—with the understanding that if they did well, they would be given the major Grammy show. The team pulled together to demonstrate what they could do, and their first Latin Grammy effort went off without a hitch. So did their first two years with the major Grammy Show.

When asked about a worst gig, John chimed in, "Have you ever heard of Marilyn Manson?" It seems that Ginger Fish needed a drumset for a video shoot. The kit had been ordered as usual. But then the manager for the band called to follow up. He asked John, "Did they tell you that you probably aren't going to get the kit back?" "No," John replied, "Why?" The manager explained, "Did they tell you the video involves fire?"

Sure enough, at the video shoot the drums were coated with a type of grease that protects stunt persons who are set on fire. This allowed the kit to burn for a while without being consumed, so that Ginger could play it while it was on fire. When CenterStaging picked up the kit, it was literally "toasted." So they set it in the back of the warehouse. As luck would have it, Marilyn Manson's manager called again and asked if the kit could be put in playable shape for an awards show. The video turned out to be so popular that they wanted to use the same burned-up drumset again. According to John, "It wasn't easy to get the kit to sound right after the fire, but eventually we were able to get it back in shape. They've called for that kit several times now."

Support Group

John Lord and Nissim Aharon were both quick to express their thanks to all the drum, cymbal, hardware, and percussion manufacturers for the support they've given to CenterStaging over the years. Their job would certainly be more difficult without it. Because of that support, the drum industry is represented in fine fashion, night after night, on your television screen.



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Buddy's 1977 Slingerland Set

by Harry Cangany

Most Buddy Rich fans know that for the last three years of his life, the great drummer played a set of vintage Slingerland Radio King drums. Buddy had long since left Slingerland as an endorser; he simply loved the historic sound of that particular kit. For several years after Buddy's death, the kit was held in storage at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. I'm happy to report that it is now on display for everyone to enjoy.

This article, however, focuses on what we think is Buddy's last factory-issue Slingerland set, made for him in 1977. It was discovered by Charlie Donnelly (arguably the dean of American drum store owners) and verified by Charles Braun of the Buddy Rich fan club. I owe each of them my thanks.

The story begins with a dream of mine: to find and display items used by Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich. In 1990, I got the chance to realize part of that dream by buying our subject set. Charlie Donnelly called me and said that the then owner wanted to sell the set and its cases. What I wanted, of course, was verification that the kit had, in fact, been Buddy's. After all, Slingerland made lots of Model 80N drum-sets. Most had 22" bass drums, but some really were copies of the 24" bass drum, 13" rack tom, and twin 16" floor tom configuration that Buddy used. Fortunately, we were able to get conclusive proof.

Buddy first became a Slingerland endorser around 1938, after having used Ludwig & Ludwig products during his Vaudeville years. In 1947, he switched to WFL, whom he stayed with through the reunification of the Ludwig Drum Company. Between 1960 and 1968, Buddy was an endorser for Rogers and, briefly, for Vox, the British offshoot of Trixon. But in late 1968 Slingerland proudly announced Buddy's return. He stayed with that company for almost ten years.

Our featured set has a 14x24 bass drum with double spurs, a 9x13 rack tom, two 16x16 floor toms, and a matching canister throne. All the hardware is Slingerland's best of the era. The only non-Slingerland items are a Swiv-O-Matic pedal and a splash cymbal arm by Rogers. We know that Buddy favored certain Rogers parts up until his death.

The kit did not include a matching snare drum. Slingerland ads featuring Buddy included an Artist Model snare, until they developed the Buddy Rich TDR model. I chose an Artist Model drum to round out the set. The accompanying fiber cases have white stenciled lettering reading "Buddy Rich—Slingerland Drum Company," along with stickers from cities around the world.

By 1978 Buddy had left Slingerland and returned to Ludwig, where he remained until late in his career. After that, the vintage Radio Kings became his drums of choice.

I remember well the day that I received the 1977 set and sat down to play it. I didn't seem to be playing any better. Obviously, the musical magic had come from their former owner.

Their current owner is just happy to have them.

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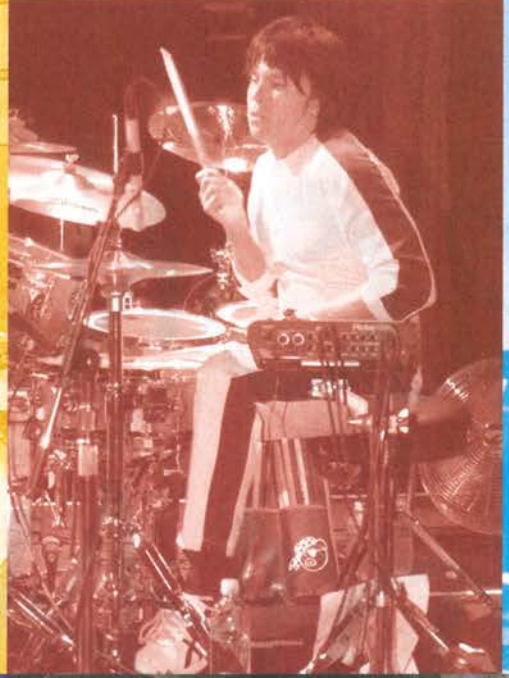

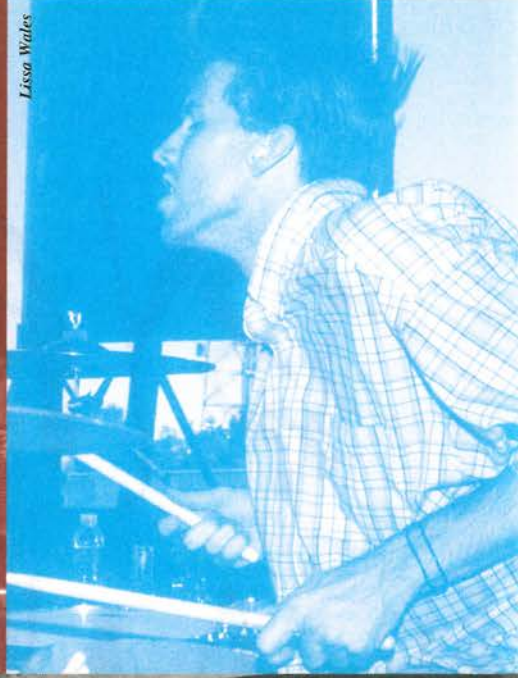
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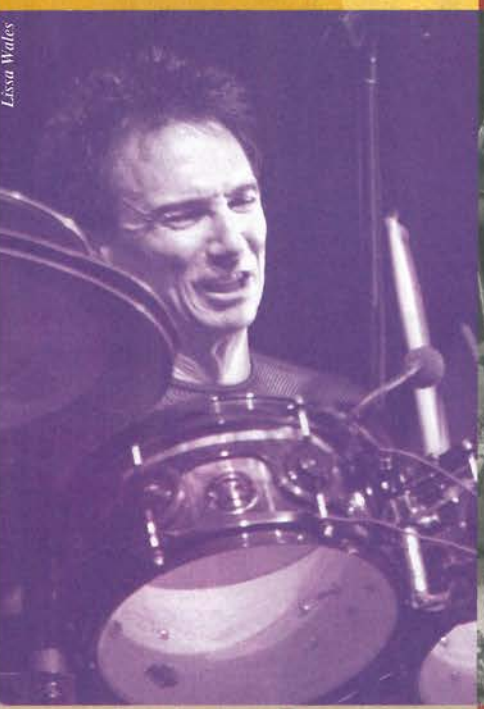
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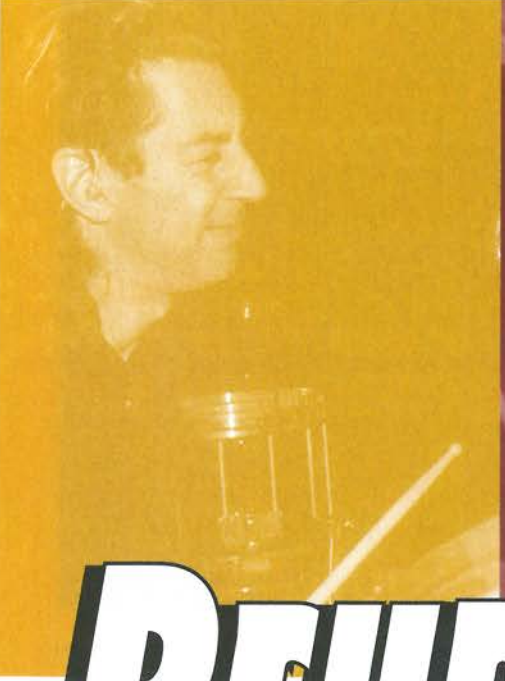
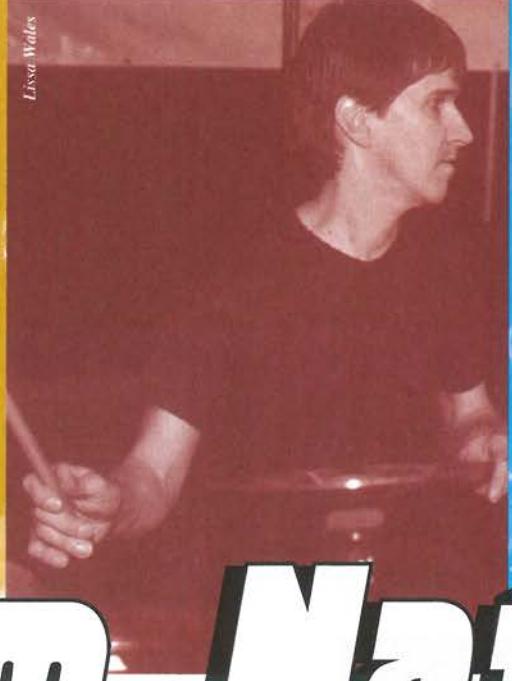




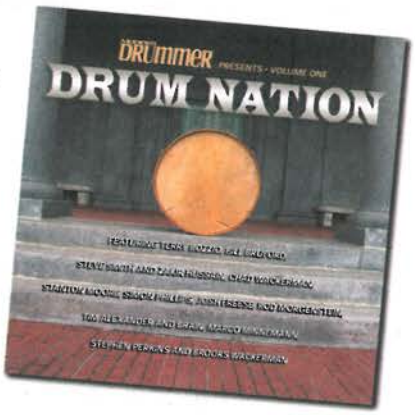
Drum Nation!

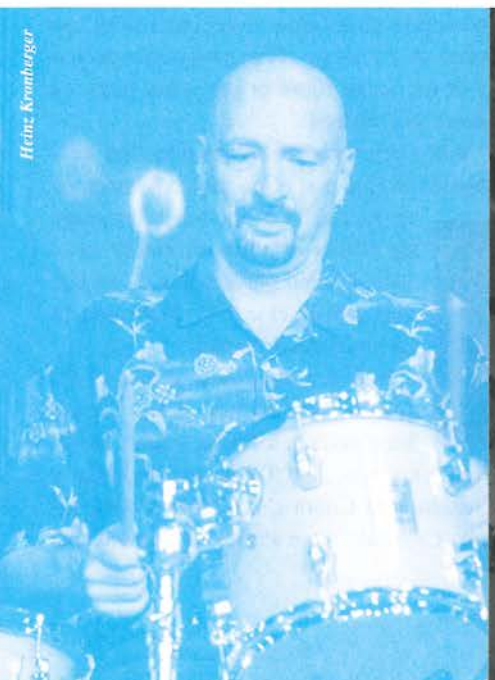
Top Drummers Unite On New Recording

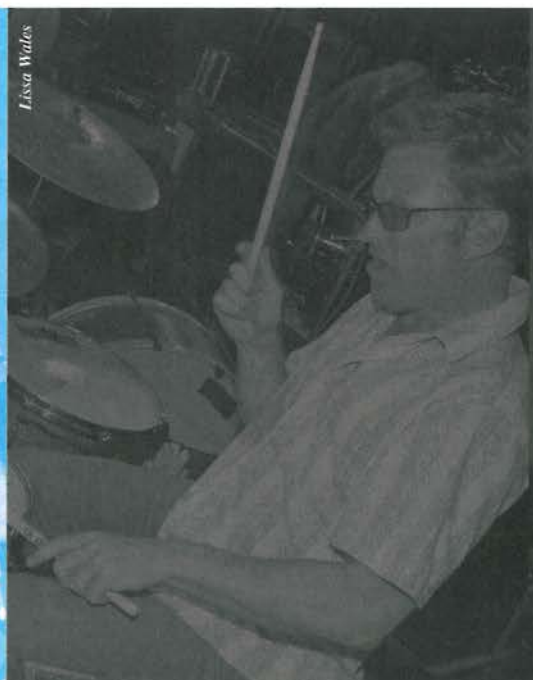
by T. Bruce Wittet

You may have spotted the advertisement in this issue for a unique CD titled *Drum Nation*. It represents the music of drummers, created outside of the constraints of record labels. How *Drum Nation* came about is an eye-opener. In fact, a non-drummer conceived of the project!

Drummers like us take it for granted, but for Magna Carta Records' Pete Morticelli, it was a revelation: Over the years, recording band after band, drummer after drummer, Pete came to the realization that drummers are *absolutely* a special lot. In Pete's eyes they were so special, so unique in their common values, that they formed a distinct community—a "drum nation."







Birth Of A Nation

Morticelli offers the following as evidence: "If a drummer is sick, other drummers rally to the cause. If a drummer has a problem with playing a lick, another drummer will share the correct way.

"Ask a guitar player about another guitar player," Pete continues, "and you get this pause. Ask a drummer about another drummer, and he'll respond, 'Oh, that guy's *great*.' I thought that it was time to bring some of these great players together in one place and document it."

Pete approached *Modern Drummer* magazine for a collaboration, and the result is a CD of drummer-led tracks. *Drum Nation* features a selection of talented drummers working unfettered. They obviously enjoyed the freedom to compose, write, and arrange material that might not work in other forums. They relished the free license to experiment with song form, drum sounds, and solos—and, ultimately, to have a little fun.

This album is no mere compilation. Although the alert reader may spot a track or two on *Drum Nation* that has been released elsewhere, it won't be the same version. All compositions were recorded specifically for this project. Each provides a rare look at the creative processes of the participating drummers. Let's use Terry Bozzio's deeply personal work as a jumping off point for an examination of several compositions that appear on *Drum Nation*.

Terry Bozzio "A Glimpse Into A Deeply Disturbed Mind"

That's the title of Terry Bozzio's composition. Although it seemed rather obvious from the enormous sound he generates, we asked him if he used his normal kit—possibly not the best word to describe Terry's mammoth setup. He responded with an enthusiastic, "Oh *yeah*!" In other words, we're hearing the full DW kit with some forty-eight toms, a vast array of cymbals, and many extras devised by Terry. On his self-produced track, we're also hearing Terry play keyboards, sing, and do sequencing. It all went down at the Austin School Of Music Studio, with Chet Hines behind the console and with some editing assistance from Pat Mastelotto.

In Terry's words, "The result was so intense and relentless that it seemed to reflect my own manic/depressive/obsessive/compulsive mental machinations. Hence the title!"

Flying in the face of current trends in techno music that see an imposition of "real" music over electronically programmed drums, Terry's goal became, in his words, "To reverse the trend. I tried to use the electronic sampled music as an accompaniment to my real drumming."

Here's how Terry did it: First he put together the backing track, using samples he had tweaked on his laptop. Then it was into the studio, where he recorded real drums, taking six "runs" in order to ensure that all his desired parts went to Pro Tools. Next, he edited the drums into stereo loops, which were employed in various ways, as you'll hear on the final mix. Then, says Terry, "I assembled the drums, voice, and backing track in Live (software sequencing), added the lead synth in Reason (software), then bounced it all back into Pro Tools for mixing in the studio."

The result is a stunning barrage of sounds and drumming, united by thematic material. While reminiscent of his earlier work with Missing Persons and Zappa, the cut also pays heed to traditions in twentieth-century classical traditions and electronica.

For the recording Terry used DW drums, pedals, and hardware, Sabian Radia cymbals, Vic Firth TB Phase 1 sticks, Attack TB Signature drumheads, and Puresound beaters and snares. Microphones were courtesy of AKG, and their mounting was via the May system. Terry also uses XL Specialty Protector cases, LP percussion, and M-Audio products.

Bill Bruford "Beelzebub"

The title suggests the heart of darkness. As Bill Bruford puts it, "'Beelzebub' is from the old Hebrew meaning Lord of the flies, prince of the evil spirits, and a form of the Devil. The tune was the first one I wrote for my first album, *Feels Good To Me*, in 1977, and is given a new and acoustic lease on life here. It's particularly 'knotty' to play, and Tim Garland's bass clarinet gives it exactly the right color—dark, brooding, and intense."

The '70s version, which also featured Allan Holdsworth and Jeff Berlin, had a decidedly electric vibe and stands up well today. The problem, however, is that Bruford has been going more emphatically acoustic in his approach. Continues Bill, "For this project, I felt there was value in demonstrating the different quality of power and dynamic headroom in an all-acoustic version. The rhythm is a bit weird: It's a 9/8, subdivided 5 and 4. When it gets to the bridge, that's extended into a 12/8, subdivided 5, 4, and 3."

In keeping with the acoustic jazz spirit, Bruford worked quickly. "Earthworks is a one-take sort of band," he explains. "And we don't worry too much about the sort of antiseptic cleanliness associated with too much Pro Tooling. Four musicians played it in the same room at the same time—a novel idea, indeed!"

Bill ends with the admission that he's thrilled to find a spot on the CD where, as he puts it, "I'm included alongside the efforts of other, infinitely more distinguished players than I, on this rich and diverse CD, dedicated to the art of the drummer."

Here's a rundown of Bruford's gear: His drums were Tama Starclassic in a Royal walnut finish. Hardware was also Tama and included a custom Iron Cobra short-cable remote hi-hat. Cymbals were Paiste: a Dimensions

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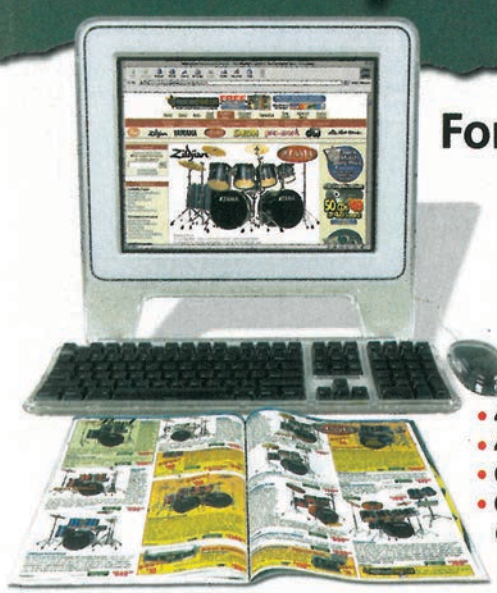

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20" Dry ride, a 20" Sound Formula flat ride, a 16" Traditional crash, 13" Dimensions heavy hi-hats, and a 20" Traditional Swish China. Heads were an Evans G1 coated on snare, G1 clears on toms, and an EQ3 on the bass drum. And when you've got your own signature stick, you use it: the Pro-Mark SD4 Bill Bruford model. Microphones included a Shure SM57 on the snare, an AKG D112 on the kick, a Neumann KM84 on the hats, Shure SM57s on the toms, and a matched pair of Neumann U89s for the cymbals/overheads.

Steve Smith & Zakir Hussain "Mad Tea Time"

By now you're thinking that this *Drum Nation* thing is all about calamitous mental events, what with all the talk of hell and madness. And Steve Smith's entry into the fray is no less frantic.

When asked by Pete Morticelli to climb aboard, Smith figured that here was an opportunity to record a duet with tabla master Zakir Hussain, with whom Steve had been touring in George Brooks' group, Summit. That was the band Steve used for the *Drum Nation* session.

"Mad Tea Time" is at once a complex and simple structure. Steve explains, "Rhythmically the tune is based on Indian drum compositions and various Indian rhythms. Melodically, 'Mad Tea Time' is based on the raga called *Madhuvanti,* which in India is often played at afternoon tea time. George and I collaborated on the writing. I brought in most of the rhythmic ideas, George [sax] composed the melody/harmony, and Fareed Haque [guitar] and Kai Eckhardt [bass] helped us flesh out the arrangement. Zakir helped it all come to life with his brilliant concept, sound, and virtuosic tabla chops."

The piece features complex unison drum parts called tihais, which are rhythmic phrases repeated (stay with us!) three times resolving to '1,' and reductions such as the opening "cow's tail," which starts with groups of seven repeated three times. As Steve points out, it's customary in Indian music to repeat rhythms three times in a spiralling descent: three sixes to three fives, three fours, three threes, three twos, and then ending with the tihai: 'takita dhaa,' 'takita dhaa,' 'takita dhaa.'

The recording modus operandi was traditional. "We recorded live," explains Steve, "with no overdubs, in a studio called Prairie Sun in Cotati, California, just north of San Francisco. The drums and the band were set up in the main room, with only Zakir in a booth. We wanted to have him isolated so that the engineer could get a great tabla sound. Zakir likes to use Shure 57s on his drums. We also used Shure mic's on the drumset, with Beta 98s clipped onto the toms, a Beta 52 on the batter side of the bass drum, an SM57 on the snare, and Shure condenser overheads. We recorded to 2" analog tape and then transferred the music to Pro Tools for mixing. We mixed the tabla toward the left side of the stereo spectrum and the drumset more on the

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right side, so you can clearly hear what each of us is playing."

Steve used his Sonor Jungle Kit, a small drumset that includes a 16" bass drum, a 10" rack tom, and a 13" floor tom, to which he added a 16" floor tom. Instead of the usual Jungle snare, Steve played a 12" Sonor Designer drum with a Remo Fiberskin head. The toms were fitted with Remo clear Ambassadors, while the bass drum got a Remo clear Emperor, muffled with a simple felt strip. The cymbals were all Zildjian: Re-Mix 12" hi-hats, a Re-Mix 17" ride, an 18" K Flat Top ride, an 8" K splash, a 9" China splash, and a 22" A Swish.

Steve added the following "scoop": "I use 'bundled rods' with this setup, as opposed to sticks, because the sound blends well with the tablas without being overpowering. I've also been experimenting with the technique of pitch bending on my drums, simulating the pitch bending of the baya—the left tabla drum. In this piece I used the left beater of my double pedal to alter the pitch of my bass drum in a couple of places."

Stanton Moore
"Sprung Monkey"

Stanton clearly had fun with this one, for several reasons. First, he had an opportunity to record a track that didn't make it onto

Ruckus, the new album by his band Galactic. And he got to lay down the track in new digs in the company of his band. Finally, he felt free to make a few significant changes to his usual Gretsch bebop kit, the sort that get drummers' mouths watering.

Galactic's new studio, sometimes referred to as The G Spot, felt in many ways like home to Stanton. For one thing, it happens to be the same office building in which his father worked for twenty-nine years.

Explains Stanton, "The studio is a section within this building. It's a nice size, probably 1,200 square feet. Because it's an old office, the rooms were separated by glass dividers, so we had our control room already isolated. We recorded in the same room, but we put the amps in different adjoining rooms so that the drums were in the main room with everybody around me."

And then entered The Lil Rascals Brass Band, right into the same room with the rest of the musicians. Leakage? No problem. With sounds swimming, Stanton nails the mid-tempo funky march, punctuating with infectious kick accents and ringing snare.

About that gear change: Instead of using his Gretsch jazz kit with a tiny 18" bass drum, Stanton thought he'd experiment a little. About a year ago, he got his hands on another Gretsch set in his preferred champagne sparkle finish, but in bigger sizes for a little extra "muscle." The kit includes a 22" bass drum, a 13" rack tom, and a 16" floor tom.

"The 13" and 16" sound really good with the big 26" bass drum I have set up on the right side of my kit," Stanton enthuses. "And the bass drum sound is by far the most thumping, hit-you-in-the-chest sound

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you've ever heard. As for the snare drum, I experimented with several, including a Remo Mondo. But the one you hear on the track is a Slingerland solid-shell Radio King reissue."

The drum tuning was very sensible; nothing was extreme. "I tuned them according to the size and 'sweet spot,'" Stanton says. "I didn't try to tune them too high; I tuned them like my usual 12" and 14", but according to the larger size. You could get a clear rimshot on any of the toms."

Miking was fairly standard, although extra attention was required for Stanton's gigantic 26" bass drum, which had no hole in the front head. The engineer miked it from a couple of feet away, pointing the mic' at the top rim of the drum. The advantage (or disadvantage, depending on your engineer) of miking a little to the top of the kick is that you also pick up some of the rest of the kit as well, much in the style of old jazz albums.

Simon Phillips
"Manganese"

This is one fiery track from the get-go. One of the first things we hear is the wall-shaking ambience of Simon's duel bass drums. "Manganese" is rife with complex phrases, over which Simon overlays an attractive melody that sticks in your head. The composition incorporates tasteful solos weaving in and out of a band ensemble figure. At the 3:32 mark, Simon does a brilliantly understated bit: He pulls off a fluttering press roll that offers the perfect dynamic foil to the thunderous fills coming just around the corner.

Lissa Wales

Says Simon, "The song took me about a day to compose and was actually the first solo piece I had written in a while. I was very lucky that Jeff Babko [keys], Jimmy Johnson [bass], and Andy Timmons [guitar] were available to do the recording. After getting sounds, throwing on the 'phones, and learning the chart, we cut the track in just a few hours. It's nice that way—live and full of energy. After a couple of guitar overdubs, that was it: It was ready to mix, and that took all of one day. This was so much fun to write, record, and mix, without the enormity of recording a full-length CD. It was a harkening back to how records were made in my earlier years, yet with all the advantages of modern techniques."

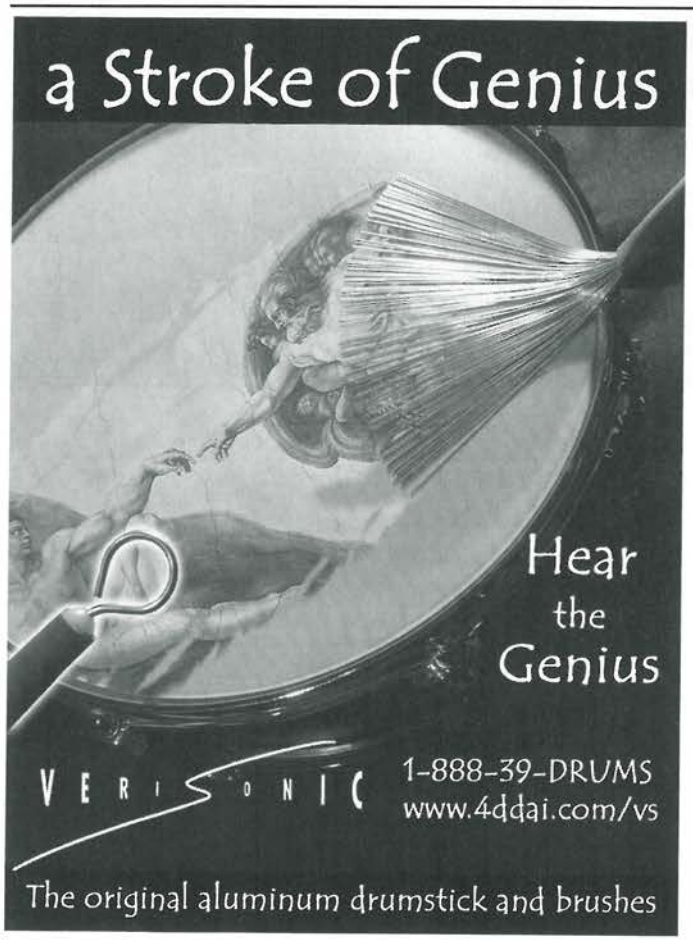
For the track, Simon used his full Tama double bass drumset with minimal muffling, as well as Zildjian cymbals.

Teasers

We've zeroed in on a few *Drum Nation* tracks, but there are many more. Here's a taste of some of the other featured artists and their tracks.

Marco Minnemann's "Wandering Portland, Maine" is a delightfully melodic composition with the usual deceptively complex Minnemann drum tracks, recorded to perfection. Says Marco, "I recorded the track first in a Portland hotel room, then overdubbed my drums in Germany using the same room I used to record my

Heinz Kronberger



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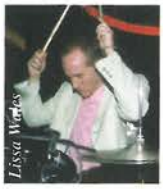
solo disc, *Green Mind Bomb*. The room is large with a stone wall. The drumset was my regular DW jazz/solo kit, with Meinl cymbals and Evans coated G1 drumheads."

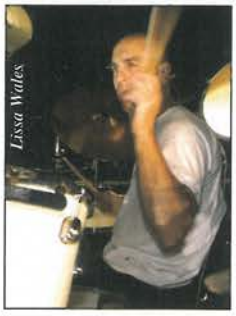
Chad Wackerman's "The Spell" has a slow 5/4 feel. "The tune has a quirky melody played on vibraphone and a koto [Japanese harp] sample," Chad says. "The melody shifts between 16th- and triplet-based subdivisions. There's a dramatic shift in mood in the bridge that features the guitar work of James Muller."

Josh Freese's "Lagerborg" is an in-your-face track that the drummer typifies as "prog-rock/new wave meets Queens Of The Stone Age." Whatever the influences, you'll freak at Josh's command of meter, phrasing, complex fills, and sound.

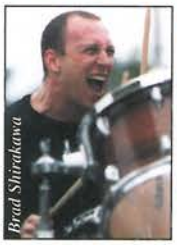


Rod Morgenstein's "Faceless Pastiche" displays Rod's new Premier Series drumset, which includes two 22" bass drums. The composition, Rod says, defies categorization and, fittingly, the title is a dig at a journalist's take on Rod's band, The Dixie Dregs. "The funny thing is," Rod notes, "the concept of the Dregs is to fuse many styles of music together in the hope of creating something new, original, exciting—and ultimately uncategorizable!"

On "Shut Up And Play Yer Drums," current and former Primus drummers **Tim Alexander** and **Brain** make for a happy union. It's an exciting performance, the two stirring up some serious drum timbres and rhythms.



Stephen Perkins and **Brooks Wackerman's** "Pull Up My Sleeve" is a drumset duet divided into three movements with increasing melodic content, defined rhythmically by free-form, 6/8, and shuffle sections.



Nation Building

And there you have it, a record of the explorations of name drummers, each of whom exhibits a different touch, attitude, style, and approach to composition. After checking it out, most people will probably agree with Magna Carta's Pete Morticelli that drummers *are* a special lot—especially these drummers. Happy listening!

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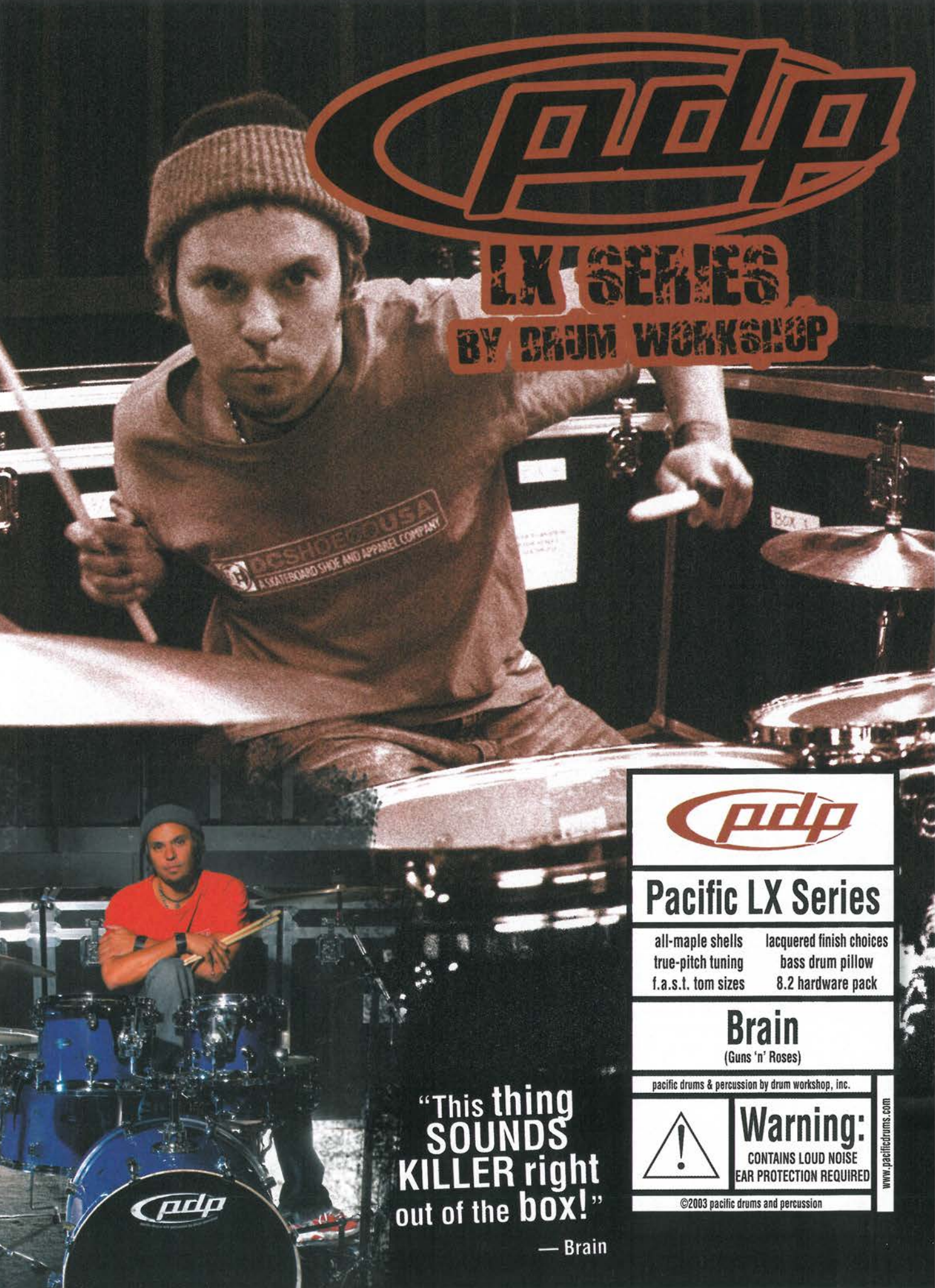
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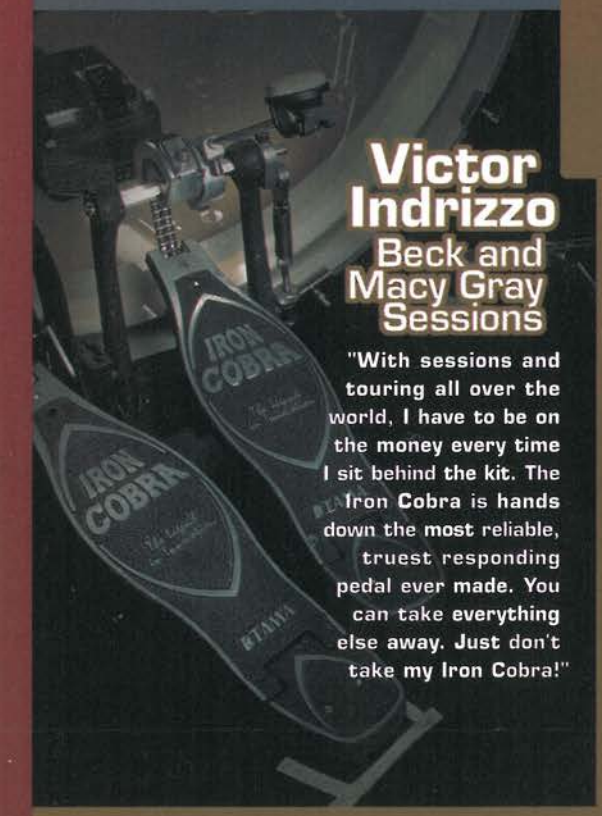

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"With sessions and touring all over the world, I have to be on the money every time I sit behind the kit. The Iron Cobra is hands down the most reliable, truest responding pedal ever made. You can take everything else away. Just don't take my Iron Cobra!"

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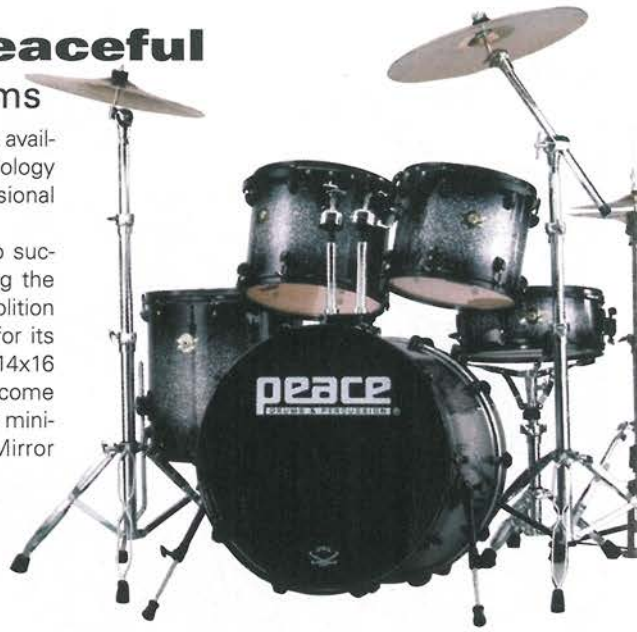

Peace DNA kit in Nightshade Atomic Sparkle finish

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Sabian's new Cymbal Tote is equipped with rollerblade wheels for easy transport. The heavily padded tote is made from durable nylon with reinforced stitching. It has four fixed internal sleeve dividers, an outside zippered pocket for hi-hat or splash cymbals, a zippered stick and accessory pocket, and a pull-out handle enclosed in a zippered compartment. The Cymbal Tote retails for $125.

Sabian also offers three new stick/mallet bags. The Economy Bag ($14.95) is a lightweight nylon bag with internal pockets, one outside pocket, and a nylon suspension cord. The Standard Model Stick Bag ($34.95) is padded and includes two outside zippered pockets, four internal sleeves for sticks and mallets, and two flap pockets. Suspension cords with "S" hooks are included, as well as a removable shoulder strap. The Premium Stick & Mallet Bag ($49.95) is a large, reinforced nylon bag with three full-size zippered outside pockets, multiple internal mallet and stick sleeves, a mesh zippered parts compartment, and retractable suspension.

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DTXPRESS III

Yamaha's new DTXTREME IIS electronic drum system features a six-piece configuration with three cymbal pads. Upgrades include a new rack, sampling capabilities, and a selection of physically modeled voices from the Yamaha Motif product line. New, soft, three-zone rubber pads are said to offer performance comfort as well as natural feel and rebound. Each pad includes individual controls for pitch and pad selection; snare pads also feature adjustable dampening control. The hi-hat controller combines an acoustic-type stand with electronic pads for a traditional look and feel.

Onboard electronics include 1,757 realistic drum voices, 128 GM voices, up to 90 preset drumkits, 40 user kits, 164 preset songs, up to 32 user-created songs, the Groove Check practice feature, and an easy-view backlit display. Voices, kits, and songs may be stored and retrieved via a SmartMedia storage card. The DTXTREME IIS will connect directly to a PC or Mac computer via an external MIDI interface or the integrated TO HOST connection for editing or downloading Web content. List price is $2,999.

For those seeking affordability in an electronic kit, Yamaha's updated DTXPRESS III ($1,295) features a selection of new audio waveforms said to reproduce ultra-realistic sounds, with a strong concentration on acoustic cymbal sounds. Physical improvements include upgraded soft rubber pads and gray metallic support racks that will hide chips and scratches. The kit ships in a single box with the rack fully assembled and all cables coded on both ends for quick and easy set-up.

DTXPRESS III Special Edition

The DTXPRESS III features more than 1,000 sounds, 128 GM voices, 80 drumkits, 127 songs, an integrated two-track sequencer, a three-zone snare pad, the Groove Check practice feature, and easy-view backlit display. The DTXPRESS III also allows players to practice in complete privacy using headphones, and will connect directly to a PC or Mac computer.

The DTXPRESS III Special Edition ($1,899) contains all the features of the DTXPRESS III, and adds an ergonomic curved rack, three round multi-zone cymbal pads, and a hi-hat controller with an acoustic-type stand and an electronic pad. The kit is also the first of its kind to ship with a bass drum pedal and drum throne.

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DTXTREME IIS

Chiming In

Spectrasound Percussion Now Produced By Grover

Grover Pro Percussion will now be producing Spectrasound Percussion products. Spectrasound has long been known for a chime instrument invented by LA studio percussionist Mark Stevens. Dubbed The Mark Tree by studio legend Emil Richards, the instrument quickly became a percussion staple in the LA studios. The shimmery glissando of the Mark Tree is now pervasive on recordings as well as on television and movie soundtracks. It has also found success in orchestral concert halls, school band rooms, and marching pits, and as a drumkit accessory.

Grover Pro will immediately commence production of the popular SM-1 Recording Brass, SM-7 Recording Natural, and SM-3CS Center Sound models. While the special bar alloys used by Spectrasound for decades will remain unchanged, Grover Pro has made major improvements to the machining and finish of the header bar. Poplar wood has been chosen for its beauty in grain and finish capacity. In addition, each Spectrasound Mark Tree is now dynamically balanced for smoother glissandi and evenness of response. The damper bar attachment system now features a captive barrel lug and two large chromed tension adjustment knobs.

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Going With The Grain

Brady Blackheart Drums

According to Brady Drums, their new Blackheart finish gives a new meaning to the words "limited edition." This highly unusual patterned timber is sourced locally in Western Australia, making it a Brady exclusive. It will be available for the company's complete range of ply drumkits and snare drums.

Due to the great variation of the grain structure of Blackheart, it cannot be duplicated or matched to the same finish. Brady is hand-selecting small amounts of visually stunning veneers, ensuring that no two pieces of veneer are the same. Once a particular timber grain is used for a handful of snare drums or a drumkit, it will never be available again. The Blackheart finish is available in satin and high-gloss finish, at Brady's normal ply drum prices.

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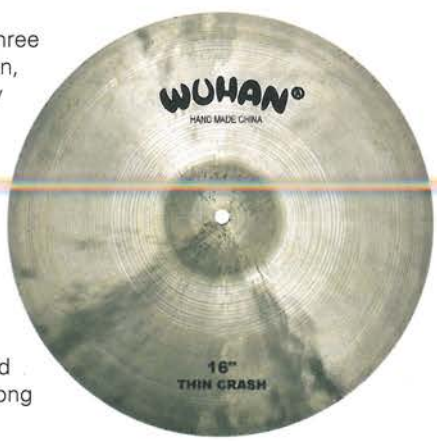
Meanwhile, Pearl's new PCS-10 Cowbell Stacker (shown here with Bala cowbell and Clave Block) allows the working percussionist to snuggle up all the cowbells and blocks that he or she can shake a stick at. The PCS-10 conveniently mounts on top of Pearl's PPS-37 cowbell mount. From there the sky's the limit. List price is $22.

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

Throwing Their Weight Around

Wuhan Expanded Crash Models



Wuhan has expanded their Traditional and Shining S cymbal lines to include three new crash models. Now 16" crash cymbals in each line will be available in thin, medium-thin, and medium weights, in order to offer drummers greater variety in cymbal response, tonality, and projection. Traditional models offer the unique characteristics of hand-hammered cymbals, including "a warm, musical tonality, and a breathy wash of overtones that creates a comfortable cushion of sound." The Shining S series offers these characteristics with additional brightness and penetration.

Working with Tom Shelley of Universal Percussion (the cymbal maker's US distributor), Wuhan's craftsmen have also given the new 16" crashes shallower bows and re-shaped bells. The modifications are said to enhance the sound of the cymbals, which the manufacturer describes as "Western, with just a touch of China in them." The 16" crash size in each series was expanded first, owing to its versatility and popularity. Other sizes will be expanded along similar lines in the near future.

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More Than Just Wires

Puresound Ultrasonic Snare Drum And 30-Strand Snares

Puresound Percussion has introduced its first accessory drum: the UltraSonic Limited Edition 5x14 copper snare. The drum features the distinctive look and sound of a high-grade copper shell. It's fitted with chrome-plated brass tube lugs, 2.3-mm triple-flanged steel counterhoops, Remo Ambassador heads, and Puresound's new 30-strand Super snare wires. The vintage-style, rolled shells have a clear lacquer sealant over their polished copper exterior surface, and are equipped with machine-formed bearing edges and snare beds.

According to its makers, the UltraSonic snare drum produces "an extraordinarily bright, dry, powerful, and articulate sound," with "a wide dynamic range and lightning-fast response." Only two hundred drums will be made. At a list price of $995, the drums will include a soft, protective drum bag, a serialized badge, and a certificate of authenticity.

Puresound's newest snare wire set is their 30-strand Super snare for 14" snare drums. The widest set of wires ever offered by the company, the snare is designed to provide increased snare activity and articulation, without choking the drum or reducing sensitivity. Although an extended snare bed is essential to complement any set of extra-wide wires, the Super needs only a slightly wider than normal (3" to 3½") snare bed for optimum performance. List price is $49.95.

(800) 479-5559, www.puresoundpercussion.com.

Bronze Gumbo

Bosphorus New Orleans Series Cymbals

The New Orleans series of cymbals from Bosphorus was developed in demand for a cymbal reminiscent of the jazz and blues sounds of The Crescent City. The line is hand-hammered in the Bosphorus "Turk" method, then lathed on both sides in one continuous cut from the bell to the outer edge of the instrument. The result is said to be a combination of "smoky lows, warm mid tones, and slightly 'trashy' highs." The cymbal is designed to be versatile enough to be played quietly in subdued jazz or blues situations, or played aggressively to cut through even the loudest blues or rock mixes. The line will include 20", 21", and 22" ride cymbals, 15", 16", and 18" crashes, and 14" hi-hats. List prices range from $232 (15" crash) to $546 (22" ride).

(770) 205-0552, www.bosphoruscymbals.com.

No Assembly Line Here

Ford Drums

Ford Drums is a new custom brand created by partners Jimmy Ford and Jay Gaylen. In addition to being a drum craftsman, Ford is a big band drummer who played with Lionel Hampton for six years. Gaylen (also a drummer) is a marketing specialist who has developed campaigns for Gretsch and Legend drums and Toca percussion.

The company offers shells made to their specs in maple, birch, oak, cherry, and mahogany, in five, six, eight, ten, or more plies, with or without reinforcement hoops. Kits can come finished in eight coats of high-gloss or satin hand-buffed lacquer in any imaginable color, or covered in virtually any available wrap. Round-peaked bearing edges can be cut at 30° or 45°, and lugs are available in solid brass, solid aluminum, or die-cast zinc. The company also offers snare drums that feature Potyondi cast-metal shells.

(714) 744-2467, www.forddrums.com.

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Don't Forget That Combination

King Kong Latin And Cymbal Stage Lockers

The Latin Locker from King Kong Kases is designed to store and transport Latin percussion instruments. Individual conga and timbale compartments are padded and carpeted to protect each drum. A large horizontal area is reserved for odd-shaped instruments, bongos, or a small set of timbales. Small parts, tools, and hand-held percussion instruments are kept organized in a lockable drawer. A back storage area can hold large stands, rack components, or a gong up to 48" in diameter.

Each case is constructed using ½" laminated plywood and high-strength aluminum extrusions. The Latin Locker is 49" wide x 25" deep x 49" high (54" with casters). It comes with a removable padded front door, heavy-duty casters, ball corners, and recessed handles and latches, at a retail price of $1,750.

King Kong's Cymbal Stage Locker includes three full-size storage slots for cymbals up to 24" in diameter, plus a padded free space for stands, stick bags, thrones, pedals, or a snare drum up to 9" in depth. The lid is foam-lined and may be removed and placed on top of the case as a play station. Each Cymbal Stage Locker is 25" wide x 25" deep x 25" high, and is constructed from ⅜" laminated plywood and aluminum extrusions, with recessed hardware and ball corners. Heavy-duty 4" casters are mounted on a ¾" board for maneuverability in the band room, on the truck, or on the performance stage. Retail price is $795.

(804) 798-7320, www.koeniginc.com.

Johnny's On His Own

Craviotto Custom Snare Drums

Noted drum builder Johnny Craviotto has launched his own drum company. Craviotto is known around the world for supplying handcrafted one-piece drumshells to drum manufacturers. With the development of The Craviotto Drum Company, he hopes to take more than just his business to the next level. Says Johnny, "The Craviotto Drum Company will give me a chance to create some pretty outrageous instruments for serious drummers, and perhaps to make a small contribution toward advancing the art of drumming."

The new company offers four series of high-performance exotic solid-shell snare drums: 5½x12, 5½x13, and 5½x14 birdseye maple with matching reinforcing hoops, 5½x13 and 5½x14 American ash with matching reinforcing hoops, 5½x13 and 6½x14 black cherry with matching reinforcing hoops, and 4x14 and 5½x14 mahogany with maple reinforcing hoops.

Only 250 sequentially numbered drums of each collection will be produced. They'll feature hand-selected, handcrafted shells and gleaming nickel-plated hardware, along with premium-quality components including Craviotto's exclusive "Diamond" tube lugs, Remo Ambassador drumheads, and Puresound 21-strand snare wires. All drums also come with a heavy-duty, padded Craviotto drum bag. Suggested retail price is $1,495 for each drum, which includes a choice of standard 2.3-mm triple-flanged, die-cast, or vintage-style counterhoops, as well as natural oil or lacquer finish.

(831) 763-0855, info@craviottodrums.com.

Craviotto solid-shell snare drums include (from left): 5½x14 American Ash, 5½x13 Black Cherry, 5½x12 Birdseye Maple and 5½x14 Mahogany solid-shell snare drums. All are equipped with standard (2.3-mm triple-flanged steel) counterhoops and natural oil finish.

...And They Play With The Box

Kotz ToneCajones

Kotz Handbuilt Drums & Percussion cajones are adaptations of the Afro-Peruvian/Cuban cajone (wooden box drum). They're built from luthier-grade tonewoods and feature a sympathetic vibrating diaphragm design, similar to the soundboard of an acoustic guitar.

Custom builder Michael Kotzen has launched a limited production run of ToneCajones said to produce "remarkably deep and resonant bass tones balanced with crisp, clean highs." Each instrument is handbuilt from either jarrah (a reddish-brown hardwood native to Australia) or mahogany. Meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail ensure that the instruments are as appealing to the eye as to the ear. No screws or nails are used. ToneCajones from this edition of 100 pieces are available for $340 directly from the manufacturer.

Other Kotz cajone designs include the Double ToneCajon (which is mounted on legs and played like a set of congas), and a model with "Slap-Pads" attached to the exterior of the drum to create slap sounds without losing bass resonance.

(909) 981-3959, www.ToneCajon.com.

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Dennis Chambers

Dennis Chambers-Outbreak; Tetsuo **Sakurai**-Gentle Hearts; **Front Page** (w/Dominique Di Piazza & Bireli Lagrene); **Bill Evans**-Let The Juice Loose/Live At The Blue Note Tokyo; **Garsed/Helmerich**-Uncle Moe's Space Ranch; **Victor Wooten/Steve Bailey** (Bass Extremes)-Just Add Water; **John Scofield**-Pick Hits Live (2 CD Japanese edition); **Gonzalo Rubalcaba**-The Trio (w/Brian Bromberg); **Niacin**-Live, Time Crunch; **Kankawa**-Uganda Live In Japan; **CAB**-s/t, CAB 2, CAB 4; **P-Funk All Stars**-Live At The Beverly Theatre (2 CDs); **Victor Bailey**-Lowblow; **Tom Coster**-The Forbidden Zone, From The Street, Let's Set The Record Straight; **Carl Filipiak**-Blue Entrance, Hotel Reál, Peripheral Vision, Right On Time, Looking Forward Looking Back; **Stuart Hart**-Inner Voice; **Gary Willis**-Bent, No Sweat; **Grafitti**-Good Groove; **Berg/Brecker/Chambers/DeFrancesco**-JazzTimes Superband; **Mark Stanley**-Insect Warriors; **Mike Stern**-Voices (Japanese edition w/bonus track)

Billy Cobham

Alivemutherforya (w/CBS Jazz Allstars); A Funky Thide Of Sings, Art Of Three (w/Kenny Barron & Ron Carter), Conundrum (2 discs + transcription book); Crosswinds, Culture Mix, Drum 'N' Voice-All That Groove, Flight Time (live), Inner Conflicts, Life & Times, Live On Tour In Europe (w/**George Duke**), Magic/Simplicity Of Expression, Depth Of Thought (2 on 1); Rudiments (2 disc anthology w/ 2 unreleased "Spectrum" tracks), Shabazz, Spectrum, Stratus, Total Eclipse; **Mahavishnu**-s/t, **Nordic**-Off Color; **North By Northwest**; **Paradox**-s/t, The First Second (live); **Dean Brown**-Here; **Jack Bruce**-I've Always Wanted To Do This, Doing This…On Ice! (2 CD's)

Vinnie Colaiuta

Kotikoski/Kleutgens/Tavaglione/Colaiuta-Cave Men; **Bill Evans**-Big Fun; **Colaiuta/Haslip/Ford**-Jing Chi; **Robben Ford**-Blue Moon; **Larry Williams & Friends**-The Beautiful Struggle; **Greg Mathieson**-Live At The Baked Potato 2000 (2 CDs w/Michael Landau); **Chick Corea Akoustic Band**-Live From The Blue Note Tokyo; **Karizma**-Document; **Masanori Sasaji**-Birdland; **Aydin Esen**-Living (w/Miroslav Vitous); **Randy Waldman**-Unreel, Wigged Out; **John Beasley**-Surfacing; **Bunny Brunel**-Dedication; **Los Lobotomys**-s/t (w/Jeff Porcaro & Carlos Vega; **Steve Tavaglione**-Blue Tav; **Warren Cuccurullo**-Thanks To Frank; **Jeff Richman**-The Way In, Live At The Baked Potato Volume One & Two (w/ Phillips, Weckl, Wackerman, Bissonette, Gottlieb etc.); **Buell Neidlinger Quartet**-Big Drum; **Michael Landau**-Tales From The Bulge; **Lothar Kosse**-Rainmaker; **Allan Holdsworth**-Secrets; **T-Square**-Friendship; **Mike Stern**-Voices; **Pages**-s/t (w/Jeff Porcaro); **Kimo Williams/Kimotion**-Tracking, War Stories; **Richard Bona**-Reverence (Japanese Edition w/bonus track); **Vinnie Colaiuta**-s/t (Japanese edition w/bonus track); **Brandon Fields**-s/t

Virgil Donati

Stretch, Just Add Water (w/Scott Henderson); **Montreal Drumfest 1996/1997** (2 CDs featuring Chambers, Donati, Horacio Hernandez, Mike Mangini, Tony Royster Jr., Chad Wackerman + many others); **On The Virg**-Serious Young Insects; **Planet X**-Moonbabies, Universe, Live From Oz; **Joel Hoekstra**-Undefined

Marco Minnemann

Broken Orange, Comfortably Homeless, Green Mindbomb, Live In L.A. (VHS Video), Live At PASIC Nov. 2000 (VHS Video), Motor, Orchids; **Illegal Aliens**-International Telephone, Red Alibis, Thickness, Time

Simon Phillips

Vantage Point, (w/Jeff Babco), Out Of The Blue (live), Another Lifetime (Japanese edition w/**bonus tracks**) Symbiosis; **Protocol**-Force Majeure (live); **Steve Lukather/Los Lobotomys**-The Candyman; **Toto**-Livefields (2 CDs), Mindfields, Through The Looking Glass, Absolutely Live (2 CDs); **Derek Sherinian**-Inertia; **Melvin Lee Davis**-Tomorrow's Yesterdays

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Five of **HUDSON MUSIC**'s most popular VHS titles have been digitally remastered and released on DVD. They feature several enhancements to give them improved sound and picture while also making them easier to navigate. Titles include *A Salute To Buddy Rich* (with Phil Collins, Dennis Chambers, and Steve Smith, $29.95), *Buddy Rich Live At The Montreal Jazz Festival* (including an audio CD of the concert, $29.95), *The Abercrombie, Erskine, Mintzer, Patitucci Band* (recorded live in New York City, $24.95), *Horacio Hernandez Live At The 2001 Modern Drummer Festival* ($24.95), and *Rocco Prestia Live At Bass Day 2000* ($24.95).
(888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com.

New from **WARNER BROS.** is an expanded version of *Rick's Licks*, by noted Canadian author/performer/teacher Rick Gratton (in collaboration with fellow percussionist and Berklee instructor Ed Uribe). The book includes thirty-five additional pages of drum licks that integrate grooves, fills, odd-time playing, and polyrhythmic concepts. Other topics include hand-foot combinations, accent placement, improvisational ideas, creative warm-ups, and a host of advanced rhythmic concepts. Detailed exercises help readers absorb the technical aspects of Gratton's licks, while an accompanying CD helps listeners gain a deeper feeling for the innovative patterns. The book/CD package lists for $24.95.

Also from Warner Bros. is a new DVD version of Russ Miller's award-winning *The Drum Set Crash Course*. In addition to covering all of the key points in Miller's book/CD, the 126-minute DVD offers bonus features, such as MP3 play-along tracks, printable PDF drum charts, a photo gallery, and a special performance of "Don't Bust My Chops" by the Grammy Award-winning Miller. Additional special DVD features include a photo gallery, product previews, and Internet connectivity. List price is $29.95.
(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

Ever wanted your own "signature" stick, or perhaps a promotional item for your band—or maybe a gift for your drum instructor? **VIC FIRTH**'s Players Label line might do nicely. The line consists of nine new hickory models made to the same strict standards as are all Vic Firth sticks, including pitch pairing and weight matching. The drummer's name may be printed on the stick in one of three fonts. Sticks must be ordered in minimum quantities of twelve pairs.
(781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.

PLANET WAVES' Swivel XLR Microphone Cables feature XLR connectors that swivel from in-line to a right angle, both ways, and can be used at any position in between. This simplifies the mounting of microphones in tight spaces—such as on a drumkit. Planet Waves' overmolded connectors provide extra strain-relief protection. The cables are available in 10' ($44.99) and 25' ($54.99) lengths.
(615) 848-0500, www.planetwaves.com.

PRO-MARK has assumed production and worldwide distribution of Webs. Webs feature a durable, layered, flexible-plastic "brush" material attached to hickory wood handles. They're said to produce a sound that's a cross between the company's Hot Rods and Nylo-Brushes. List price is $29.95 per pair.
(713) 314-1100, wwwpromarkdrumsticks.com.

CODA DRUMS (from **The Music Link**) now offers DS-200 Generation Beta five-piece student kits in Metallic Silver finish. The kits feature 12-lug mahogany-shell "power" toms, an 8-lug steel snare drum, and double-braced hardware. In addition to the Metallic Silver, they're available in Black, Dark Blue, and Metallic Wine Red finishes. List price is $499.
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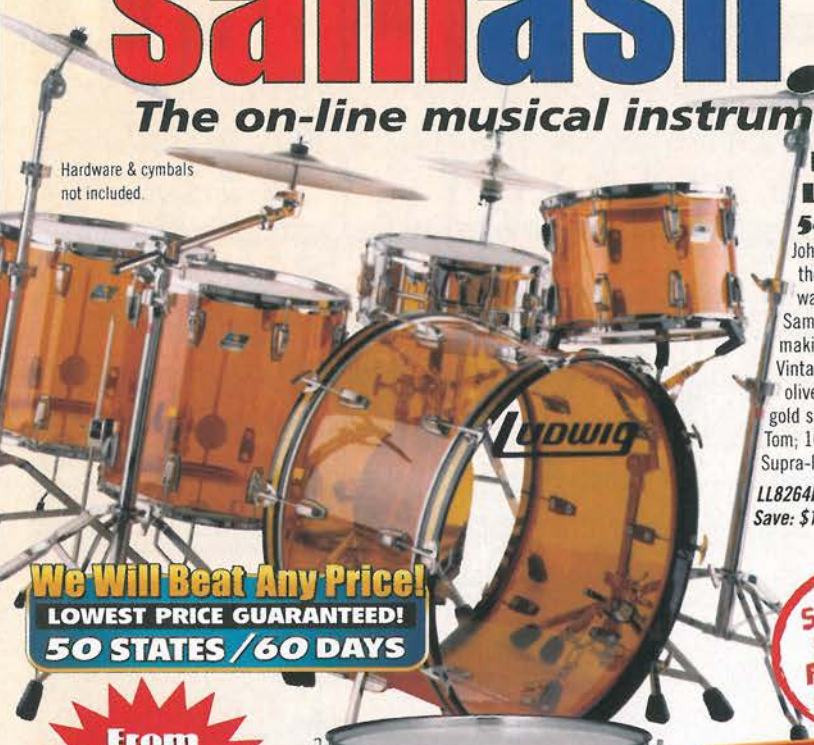

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John Bonham's drumming was the driving force that propelled the legendary Led Zeppelin. The original Amber Vistalite kit was featured in Zep's rockumentary - The Song Remains The Same. The folks at Ludwig have faithfully recreated this history making kit and are making it available for a very limited time. Vintage appointments include: gold sparkle bass drum hoops; olive and blue badges; classic lugs, brackets, spurs and legs; gold sparkle inlays. Drum Sizes: 14"x26"" Bass Drum; 10"x14" Tom; 16"x16" and 16"x18" Floor Toms; 6-1/2" x 14" chrome plated Supra-Phonic Snare Drum.

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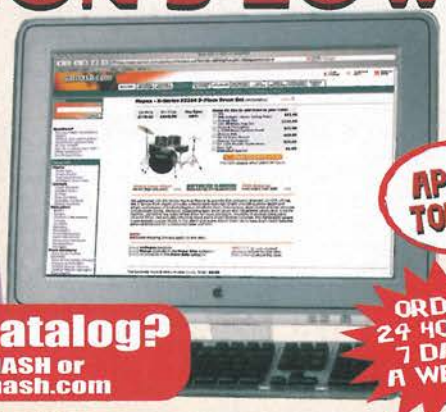

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The MD Readers Poll lets you voice *your* opinions about the drummers, percussionists, authors, and educators whose efforts have been particularly outstanding in the past year.

All it takes is a stroke of your pen (or a click of your mouse) to show support for your personal faves. So get out there and vote!

Instructions:

1. You may use the official *MD* ballot from the magazine, or a photocopy. You may also vote by email. (See below.)
2. All ballots must include your name, address, and signature.
3. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box.
4. Make only one selection in each category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.
5. Place the ballot in an envelope, affix appropriate postage, and mail to *Modern Drummer*'s offices at 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.
6. Ballots must be postmarked no later than **March 15, 2004.** Results will be announced in the July 2004 issue of *MD.*
7. PRIZE DRAWING: Providing your name, address, and signature automatically makes you eligible for *MD*'s voter-appreciation drawing. Three ballots will be drawn at random; each winner will receive a free one-year subscription to *Modern Drummer.*

To Cast Your Vote Online:

1. Go to: www.moderndrummer.com.
2. Click on the ballot button located on the home page.
3. Fill in your selections in the appropriate fields on the ballot.
4. You must complete the fields for your name and mailing address. Anonymous email entries will be disqualified.
5. After you have entered your selections, press the "Submit" button.

(Note: Your browser must accept cookies in order for your vote to count.)

Category Descriptions

Hall Of Fame
Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made a historic contribution to the art of drumming. Current members of the Hall of Fame are not eligible for this category. They are: **Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Joe Morello, Carl Palmer, Bill Bruford, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Jeff Porcaro, Larrie Londin, Elvin Jones, Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, Ringo Starr, Roy Haynes, Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, Steve Smith,** and **Simon Phillips.**

All-Around
Not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer, but to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications.

Studio
Drummers who record with many different artists and/or on jingles, TV, and film scores.

Mainstream Jazz
Drummers performing in small acoustic jazz groups, in styles such as bop, avant-garde, etc.

Contemporary Jazz
Drummers performing fusion, jazz-rock, new age, etc.

Big Band
Drummers performing regularly in traditional big bands, stage bands, etc.

Up & Coming
The most promising drummer brought to the public's attention within the past twelve months.

Rock
Drummers performing mainstream, modern, and "college" rock music.

Metal
Drummers performing in all metal styles, including speed, thrash, death, etc.

Punk
Drummers performing in punk or primarily punk-influenced styles.

Hand Percussionist
Hand and specialty percussionists (as opposed to drumset players). Includes TV and touring percussionists, and performers of Latin, Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, as well as other world percussion.

Classical/Mallet Percussionist
Includes mallet percussionists (of all styles), timpanists, and symphonic percussionists.

Hip-Hop
Drummers performing hip-hop, rap, dance, and other contemporary urban music styles.

R&B
Drummers performing funk, blues, and gospel styles.

Clinician
The drummer or percussionist you found most inspiring and educational in a live clinic presentation.

Educational Book
Your favorite educational drum book released within the past twelve months. Please name the book and author.

Educational Video/DVD
Your favorite educational video or DVD released within the past twelve months. Please name the video/DVD and artist.

Recorded Performance
Your favorite recording released within the past twelve months. Please name the artist, the drummer, the song, and the album.

Modern Drummer's 26th Annual
Readers Poll Official Ballot

Hall Of Fame _____

All-Around _____

Studio _____

Mainstream Jazz _____

Contemporary Jazz _____

Big Band _____

Up & Coming _____

Pop _____

Rock _____

Metal _____

Punk _____

Prog _____

Hand Percussionist _____

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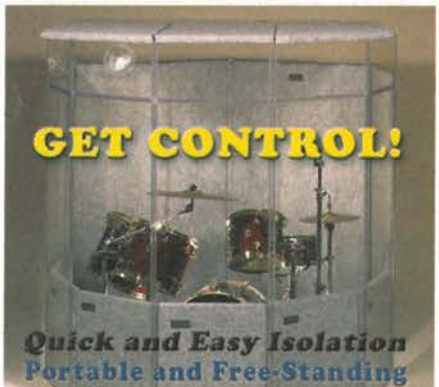
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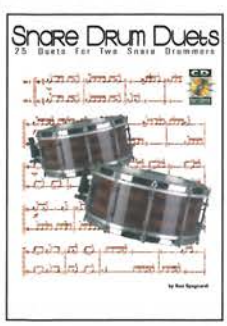

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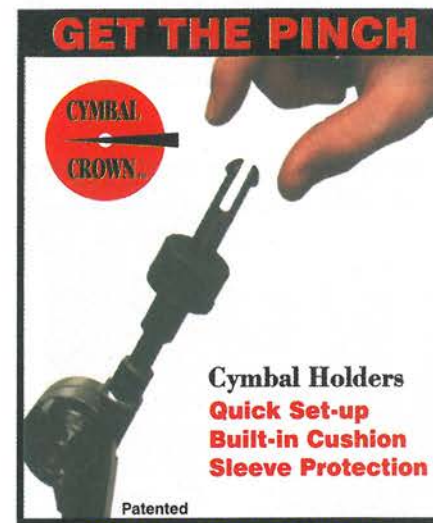

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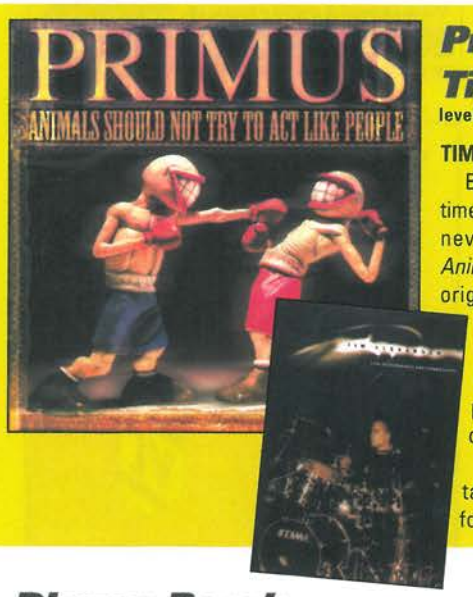

Primus Animals Should Not Try To Act Like People (CD/DVD) (Interscope)
Tim Alexander Live Performance And Commentary (DVD) (Hal Leonard)

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TIM ALEXANDER, it's good to have you back.

Brian "Brain" Mantia did a worthy job as Primus's timekeeper from 1997 to 2000. But now it's like Tim never left. The new five-song-EP portion of the *Animals* package bursts with vitality—if not exactly originality—as the thrilling synergy between **Les Claypool**, **Larry LaLonde**, and Alexander returns undiminished by time. Tim's thick-toned gaggle of toms sounds better than ever, and his precise, prog-tinged touch complements Claypool's percussive basslines like no other drummer's could.

The EP is paired with a funhouse DVD that contains thirteen kooky videos and live/backstage footage of varying quality. Highlights include a brief montage of Claypool—no rhythmic slouch—playing drums, as well as a circus-like clip for "Mr. Krinkle" that gives the costumed Flaming Lips a run for their money.

If you'd like to cop Alexander's parts—or just watch him frolic uninterrupted on his vast playground of a drumset—check out his surround-sound DVD. It's pure performance, featuring unaccompanied Primus and Laundry beats. Don't skip the commentary track; though he takes a while to get babbling comfortably, Alexander offers fascinating insight into his craft. The bummer is that his pedal work isn't shown enough, a mistake with someone so fleet of foot. **Michael Parillo**

Dimmu Borgir
Death Cult Armageddon (Nuclear Blast)

With their corpse makeup and demonic album titles, many black metal bands seem cartoonish on the surface. But don't judge Dimmu Borgir's latest full-length by its cover and trite title. The Norwegians offer a savagely creative, almost elegant mixture of black, death, and thrash, and often garnish it with gorgeous segments performed by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. While vocalist **Shagrath** gurgles distinctively and **Silenoz** and **Galder** unleash their tremendous guitar assault, **NICHOLAS BARKER** provides magnificent, clever drumming. His chops crash and boom on the sprawling "Progenies Of The Great Apocalypse" and the operatic "Blood Hunger Doctrine," and frolic rapidly on the chilling "Cataclysm Children." Pulverizing, profound, and fun. **Jeff Perlah**

Deep Purple
Bananas (Sanctuary)

Although the instrumental adventurism of legendary progressive metal-boogie band Deep Purple has mellowed with age, the quality of composition is still top notch, and Ian Gillan's vocals are as strong as ever. And **IAN PAICE** remains one of the most musical and gifted drummers in rock history. On *Bananas*, classic British rock's great lefty continues to lay down a mean groove while sprinkling his flashy trademark fills sparingly. These rock icons continue to prove that you're never too old to rock 'n' roll with musical dignity. **Mike Haid**

Senses Fail
From The Depths Of Dreams (Drive-Thru)

New Jersey quintet Senses Fail play New Found Glory–ish emo with a heavy edge. While the style on their EP may be nothing new, the confident drumming of **DAN TRAPP** surely is. Trapp delivers a rock-solid performance that displays both considerable chops and a sensitive ear. Between his lightning-quick snare drum bursts and his choppy, driving hi-hat work, it's obvious that Trapp has all the tools, which is exciting because he's only sixteen years old. Having already mastered punk drumming, Dan's future is downright scary. Given a few years to grow and find his own voice, Trapp could become a monster. **Mike Lang**

Greg Howe/Victor Wooten/ Dennis Chambers
Extraction (Tone Center)

This all-star fusion trio goes way off the musical hook with excellent, high-energy instrumental compositions and chops to match. **DENNIS CHAMBERS** goes ballistic on the intro of the title track, and never lets up from there. Along the way, the band blasts a fresh new hole through '70s-era Tony Williams track "Proto Cosmos," and Chambers unleashes a maniacal solo on the Latin-flavored "Contigo." There's some serious funk going down on this disc too, and as always, Chambers is impressive with his infectious feel and brilliant creativity. **Mike Haid**

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES
Shelly Manne, Cal Tjader, Willie Rodriguez

SHELLY MANNE's drumming was a study in sophisticated swing. Rarely has that been made clearer than on *Yesterdays*, a live recording from 1960. Accompanied by his killer quintet that included **Russ Freeman** and **Monty Budwig**, it sounds like a night as usual for these cool bop maestros as they cruise through the breezy swing of "Cabu," then stand back as Manne navigates the blistering brush-work of "Poinciana" and a shimmering, snappy solo on "Straight, No Chaser." (Pablo)

Cal Tjader's 1977 release *Cuban Fantasy* is also taken from a concert performance, its scalding Latin rhythms and tangy vibraphone improvs the polar opposite of Manne's cool style. With Tjader's atmospheric vibes and the band's electric barrio energy, *Cuban Fantasy* scorches, from the eye-watering funk of "Guarabe" to the slow burn mambo "Manuel Deeghit." Drummer **PETE RISO** is Tjader's secret weapon, a torrid showman with a merciless red-hot time feel. (Fantasy)

The **WILLIE RODRIGUEZ** Jazz Quartet's 1963 date *Flatjacks* brings swing and Latin together in the briskly popping stick work of the bandleader, who was also an in-demand drummer with Jimmy Smith and Oliver Nelson. *Flatjacks* has a 1960s period feel, but Rodriquez's spicy drumming sounds timeless. (Milestone) **Ken Micallef**

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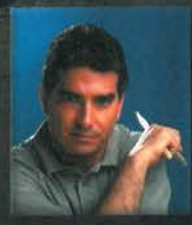

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Jason Crosby

Four Chords And Seven Notes Ago (Artists House)

On *Four Chords...*, Jason Crosby shines on keys, trumpet, and violin, and his playing and writing combines the eclectic flair and sophistication of the new Southern fusion. Drummers **JEFF SIPE** and **DAVE DIAMOND** are game for all the different spins: The first three songs veer from avant-garde to smooth Southern soul to Zappa-ish Latin, yet somehow the stew works. Diamond's sticking on "Out Of The Box" is pure Headhunters funk, laying perfectly with Crosby's clavinet. And Sipe is a premier jamming, conjuring drummer who can burn on a dime ("Bumblebutt"), sneak in the subtle licks ("Georgie's Conscience"), and lay down a mean groove ("Love's In Need"). **Robin Tolleson**

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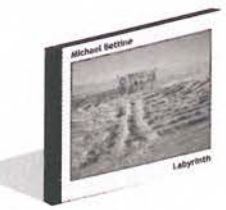
Stars Show The Way / Labyrinth (editions intuitive arts)



MICHAEL BETTINE is a percussionist specializing in metal, and these CDs focus on his art through two different solo performances. *Labyrinth*, subtitled *Music For Gongs*, consists of nine beautifully hypnotic tracks. The music was composed with his particular gongs in mind, a collection thirty years in the making. From the opening majestic washes of "Ritual—Ascension" to the high-pitched melodies of "Medicine Wheel," the entire sound spectrum is covered. On *Stars Show The Way*, drums and other percussion also make appearances. The variety of instruments used here is staggering. Whether it's melodic tom patterns or Asian metal percussion figures, these twenty-five pieces possess an undeniable immediacy and intensity. Both CDs are excellently recorded, with a clear sound that shows off the instruments quite well. Sinking into Bettine's sound world is fascinating and inspiring. (www.homepage.mac.com/mbettine) **Martin Patmos**

Om Trio

globalpositioningrecord (Catapult)

From the opening beats of "Shant," *globalpositioningrecord* sounds like a wheel is about to fall off and a gear is sticking. And it grooves like mad. This band digs in at the plate—they don't always hit the ball out of the park, but they take a big rip at it. The trio isn't always in a hurry to move on from a good thing, either, which is also nice. Drummer **ILYA STEMKOVSKY** drives over the clever changes of "Discrepancy" with a straightforward groove, waiting until the end to drop a huge fill. He plays it straight and funky on the highly syncopated "L," hands loose, big and quick too. Be alert for the rocking hidden track, a popular, well-chosen cover. **Robin Tolleson**

HEAVY WORLD

Neurosis & Jarboe, Ill Niño, Ephel Duath, Children Of Bodom, King Diamond

In the world of Heavy, it's often the adventurous, weird stuff that deserves the most acclaim. Neurosis have been banging their tribal soundscapes since 1985, and drummer **JASON ROEDER** and his percussion cohorts don't let up on *Neurosis & Jarboe*—a wildly creative collaboration with the silky-voiced former Swans chanteuse. (Neurot Recordings)

Ill Niño's Latin-flavored *Confession* also offers a cool tribal feel—especially through the drumming of **DAVE CHAVARRI** and percussionist **DANNY COUTO**—and the results are melodic and menacing. (Roadrunner)

Jazzy horn arrangements merge with raging extreme metal, prog oddness, and other disparate elements on Italian band Ephel Duath's aptly titled *The Painter's Palette*, so don't miss **DAVIDE PIOVESAN**'s colorful strokes. (Earache)

On *Hate Crew Dethroll*, Finnish quintet Children Of Bodom offer a more traditional approach—think a revved-up Maiden—yet there's plenty of insane minstrelsy harnessed by **JASKA W. RAATIKAINEN**'s relentless skin-work. (Century Media)

Speaking of insane...makeup-clad, operatic-voiced King Diamond and drummer **MATT THOMPSON** unleash some of their finest thrash yet on *The Puppet Master*. (Metal Blade)

Jeff Perlah

Vida Blue

The Illustrated Band (Sanctuary)

On its second album, trio Vida Blue enlists Miami's Spam Allstars, a fiery horns/percussion/DJ group, to add extra punch. The Spam hits the spot; *Illustrated Band* is much more powerful than Vida's unfocused 2001 debut. This time it's a jammy, long-form funk party, and keyboardist/leader **Page McConnell** (of Phish) plays the classy host, laying back and letting his gifted guests get acquainted. **RUSSELL BATISTE** clearly relishes his connection with Spam timbalero **TOMAS DIAZ** and percussionist **LAZARO ALFONSO**, and their crackling rhythms are wisely spotlighted. The bell of Batiste's ride gets a serious workout—from syncopated funk patterns to Afro-Cuban cascara. **Michael Parillo**

TRES LATINO ROCKERS

Bat Makumba, Radio Mundial, Café Tacuba

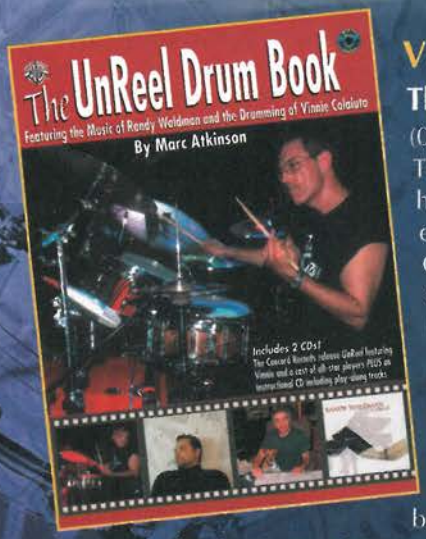
Bat Makumba are culturally schizophrenic on their self-titled CD. For starters, the band sings in three languages—Portuguese, Portuñol (Portuguese and Spanish), and German—and spins plenty of polyrhythms. Styles such as ijexa, baiao, samba-reggae, Afro-Brazilian Barravento, and ska have equal settings at this table. Percussionist **EMILIANO BENEVIDES**, four kit drummers, and other skin slappers make this a joyful listening experience. (www.batmakumba.com)

Drummer **ANDY SANESI** and percussion cohorts **GIANNI MANO**, **GERALDO FLORES**, and **FERNANDO SUBIRATS** explode with Afro-Latin-funk on Radio Mundial's *La Raiz*. The 6/8 shuffle of "Cuarto Sin Ventanas" plays like a good Sting tune: It's accessible yet rich in rhythmic layers. (www.radiomundialband.com)

After reviewing the sonically luscious *Cuatro Caminos*, we know why Café Tacuba is being called Mexico's answer to Radiohead. Guest drummers **VICTOR INDRIZZO** and **JOEY WARONKER** lay the foundation, allowing the band to freely saturate the heady upper registers. Waronker's crafty hi-hat, cymbal, and bass drum work complement and then rightfully overtake the static programming on ambient gem "Puntos Cardinales." Beat placement is crucial here. (MCA Records/Universal Music Mexico, www.cafetacuba.com.mx)

Will Romano

THE BEST OF THE BEST



VINNIE COLAIUTA

The UnReel Drum Book
(0730B)

This is what the drumming world has been waiting for... The first-ever book featuring Vinnie Colaiuta. The book includes transcriptions and charts from Randy Waldman's *UnReel* CD along with audio examples of the solo excerpts transcribed and slowed down so evey drummer can explore the work of this master drummer. As a bonus, this groundbreaking book includes the Concord Records release of *UnReel* and two tracks from that CD remixed without drums on the educational CD that accompanies the book. The author, Marc Atkinson, also includes a unique method, allowing the student to better understand advanced polyrhythmic concepts that have become Vinnie's trademark.

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Mike Stern

These Times (ESG)

Along with an explosive band that includes percussionist **ARTO TUNCBOYACIYAN** and bassist/vocalist **Richard Bona**, Mike Stern's latest benefits from the fireball finesse of **VINNIE COLAIUTA**. Stern's maturation as a songwriter, Colaiuta's expansive rhythms, and Bona's serene vocals add up to make this one of the best albums of the guitarist's career. And Colaiuta gets to blow over speedy sambas, triumphal rock grooves, whisper-quiet brushed ballads, raucous reggae, and airy bop. In fact, Vinnie's drumming here equals his performance on Randy Waldman's *Wigged Out*, and far surpasses the boring *Jing Chi Live At Yoshis*.

Ken Micallef

Jimmy Cobb's Mob

Cobb's Groove (Milestone)

Renowned for his silky presence on many classic Miles Davis recordings, **JIMMY COBB** has recently surfaced as the leader of an exceptional quartet, first heard on 1998's *Only For The Pure Of Heart*. Cobb revives that band for the equally mellow but propulsive bop of *Cobb's Groove*. And groove is the key word here, as the quartet dances and improvises over the master drummer's elegant phrasing and airy timekeeping. Cobb's solos are brief and musically concise throughout, like wallet-sized snapshots that encompass his enviable drumming experience in tasty bite-sized moments.

Ken Micallef

DVDs

Rush

In Rio (Anthem/Coming Home/Zoe)

level: all, $29.98

Let's put the Rush phenomenon in perspective. The band was formed in 1969 and released their first recording in 1974. Now they release their first live concert DVD, filmed at Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on the final night of the (66-date) 2002 *Vapor Trails* tour (one of the highest grossing tours of the year) in front of 60,000 fans (the largest audience in Rush concert history). The extraordinary three-hour concert (disc one) features the cream of the Rush catalog (28 songs). Disc two includes an insightful and amusing documentary in which the legendary **NEIL PEART** explains the basis of his "O Baterista" drum solo. Peart's lengthy, energetic, well-constructed, and entertaining solo is featured a second time, with multi-angle viewing, on disc two. Colorful liner notes are also written by Peart. This DVD set is a Rush/Peart treasure trove. Just one question: Who let the guitar player mix this thing? The drums and vocals are buried and unbalanced in the mix. Come on, this is Neil Peart!

Mike Haid

Pretenders

Loose In L.A. (Eagle Vision)

level: all, $20.98

MARTIN CHAMBERS is one of the world's greatest rock drummers, at least according to the producers of this concert recorded at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles in February 2003. After viewing this 140-minute DVD packed with familiar and new tunes, you might agree with that assessment. Chambers easily slips into reggae, country-rock, and punk, while kicking it up a notch on classics "Mystery Achievement" and "Message Of Love" with infectious, hard-driving, syncopated beats. Chambers really spanks his toms and cymbals, though side views reveal his use of ghosting and subtle sticking patterns. It's a great package (hi-def., 5.1 surround sound), but buyers beware: bandleader **Chrissie Hynde**, as she's known to do, speaks her mind, sometimes using explicit language.

Will Romano

Hands On

GIOVANNI HIDALGO is featured on two new instructional hand-drum DVDs. On *In The Tradition* he explains the four basic conga sounds, tuning techniques, and danzon, son montuno, bolero, and charanga patterns. Gio emphasizes a calm and peaceful mental attitude while playing, "so that you can analyze what you're doing while you play." He also speaks simply about dedication in learning to play and intensity in performance. *Conga Virtuoso* features Hidalgo with a band featuring **IGNACIO BERROA**, **Danilo Perez**, and **David Sanchez**. Here he starts with just one drum, explaining the evolution of the tumbao and how bass parts are played on the conga. He adds timbales and bongos, and discusses the jump to three congas, the rhythms of Puerto Rico, and the rudiments on congas. (Warner Bros.)

The very personable and focused **RICARDO MONZON** leads us through *Basic Afro-Cuban Rhythms*. Monzon explains 3:2 son clave, rhumba clave, and 6/8 clave, and how slight displacements make a big difference. You will be clapping along, then playing along, with the conga tumbao and timbale cascara patterns. (Berklee)

***JOHN YOST** Teaches: West African Rhythms* is very interactive, with no frills. Yost is selling the steak, not the sizzle, and there's plenty to learn here. Viewers are given choice of instrument (djembe or dundun), rhythm, and speed. Wisely, the djembe sections are seen from out front and from the player's view. And the dundun sections offer separate parts for the dundunba, sangban, and kenkeni. (www.tintinsite.com)

STEVE THORNTON's *Rhythmic Construction Of World Music* comes off a lot like a Latin Percussion commercial. Thornton explains the instruments and rhythms well—the samba with its pandeiro, agogo bells, cuica, and surdo—as well as playing samba on congas, timbales, and "newer instruments for a little bit of Latin flavor to the funky samba." Unfortunately, co-host (and LP founder) Martin Cohen seems impatient, and his comments at times take away from the flow. (Latin Percussion/Warner Bros.)

Robin Tolleson

Correction

Last September we ran a review of Sworn Enemy's *As Real As It Gets* album, which in its liner notes lists drummer Paulie Antignani, who we credited with playing drums. In actuality Timothy Mycek, who is currently touring with Metal Blade Records band Unearth, recorded the tracks. Our apologies to Tom and to Paulie (a slammin' player in his own right).

rating scale poor classic

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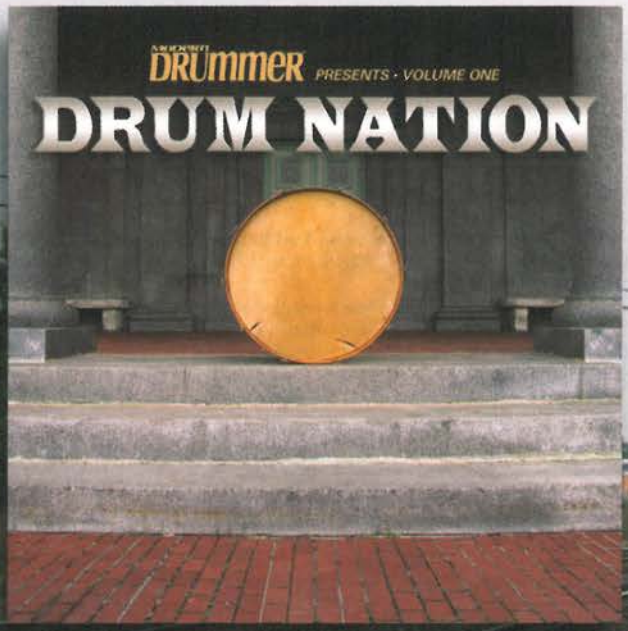

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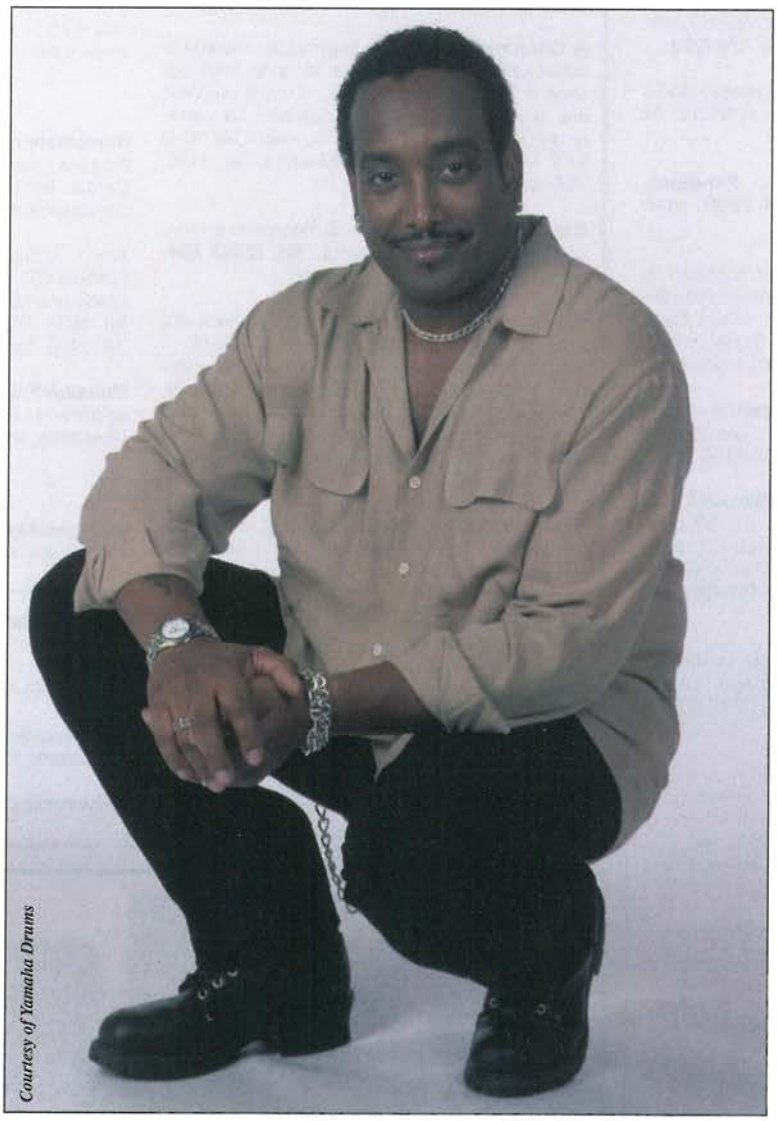
Tony Thompson

Tony Thompson, whose playing helped to define the sound of disco in the 1970s and pop/rock in the 1980s, died this past November 12 at the age of forty-eight, following a battle with cancer. He was featured on *MD*'s December 1985 cover, and in the August 2001 *Update* department.


Courtesy of Yamaha Drums

As a young drummer, Tony was a fan of Ginger Baker and John Bonham, leading him to appreciate a big, powerful drum sound. Later he encountered the playing of Billy Cobham with The Mahavishnu Orchestra, which got him heavily into fusion drumming. He also studied with Mahavishnu alum Narada Michael Walden.

Somewhat ironically (considering his rock and fusion background), Tony's first major success came in the 1970s as a member of Chic, one of the biggest dance bands of all time. Originally criticized by band co-leader/guitarist Nile Rodgers for playing too much, Tony was taken under co-leader/bassist Bernard Edwards' wing. Edwards helped Tony to redirect his energies toward pure groove. In return, Tony helped take Chic to the top of the dance charts with such hits as "Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah)," "Good Times," and the classic disco anthem "Freak Out."

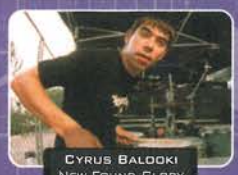
After leaving Chic in the early 1980s, Tony gained success as a session drummer, lending his talents to recordings by Sister Sledge (*Love Somebody Today*), Debbie Harry (*Kookoo*), Rod Stewart (*Out Of Order*), Jody Watley (*Jody Watley*), Mick Jagger (*She's The Boss*), David Bowie (*Let's Dance*), and Madonna (*Like A Virgin*).

Eventually, Tony's oversized drum sound and powerful groove earned him a reputation as one of pop/rock's leading drummers. This, in turn, led to his participation in a 1985 all-star project involving members of Duran Duran and vocalist Robert Palmer. Named for the studio in which they recorded, The Power Station—propelled by Tony's distinctive sound and deep groove—scored hits with "Some Like It Hot" and a cover of T. Rex's "Get It On (Bang A Gong)." Tony also appeared on Palmer's solo hit "Addicted To Love."

Tony's most high-profile performance took place in 1985, at the legendary Live Aid concert at RFK Stadium in Philadelphia. Realizing a boyhood dream, Tony served as co-drummer (with Phil Collins) for a reunion performance by the members of Led Zeppelin. In 1986, Tony joined Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones again for some recording sessions in Bath, England, to explore the idea of a group re-formation. The promising project was halted when Tony was injured in a serious car accident.

In recent years Tony had been dividing his time between doing recording projects and screening potential songwriters for a production company. His session activities included Duran Duran's *Thank You* (1995), Power Station's *Living In Fear* (1996), and eight tracks on Nine Inch Nails' *The Fragile* (1999).

The Tony Thompson Fund has been established to help Tony's family with medical bills. Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to The Tony Thompson Fund, c/o One Incredible Family, 13455 Ventura Blvd., #224, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423. For more information, go to www.tonythompsonfund.com.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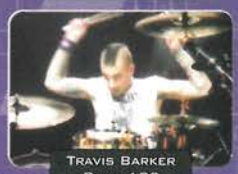
TRAVIS BARKER
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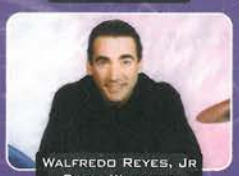
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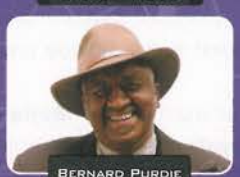
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TONIGHT SHOW BAND

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ACRES

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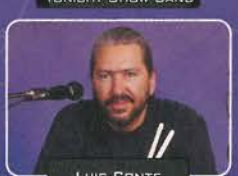
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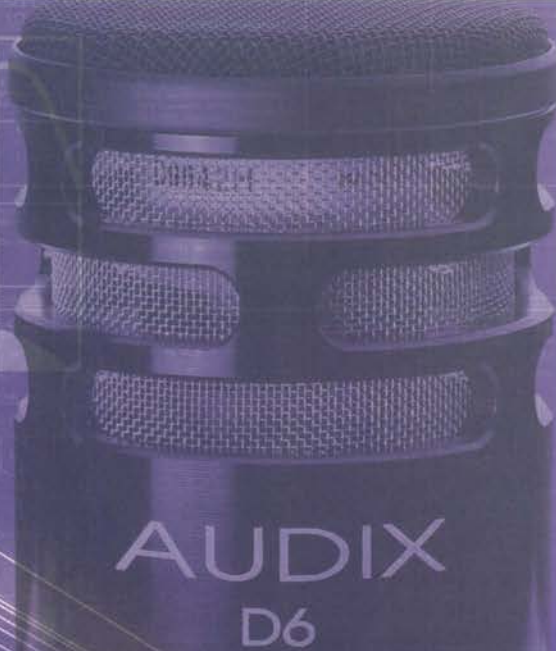

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Montreal Drum Fest 2003

The eleventh annual Montreal Drum Fest, held this past November 7–9, presented drum and percussion styles from around the globe. As usual, the venue was the Salle Pierre Mercure in downtown Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Friday, November 7

Fest organizers Ralph Angelillo and Serge Gamache launched the festival with a Friday-evening concert featuring **Mike Portnoy & Hammer Of The Gods** in a tribute to Led Zeppelin. The musical and physical resemblance was uncanny, what with vocalist Daniel Gildenlow's open shirt revealing a frail Robert Plant physique, Paul Gilbert's Jimmy Page-ish curly wig and dual-neck guitar, and bassist Dave LaRue's perfect John Paul Jones demeanor. Portnoy's go-for-it spirit on his amber see-through kit—along with a Bonzo wardrobe including a bowler hat and white jumpsuit—contributed greatly to the Zeppelin vibe.

Opening for Portnoy were Quebec heavyweights **Flo Mounier** (Cryptopsy) and **Ange Curcio**, whose spectacular command of the drumset ranged from new punk to fusion styles.

Saturday, November 8

Local lads **Mario Roy** and **Bruno Roy** warmed the hall with a guided tour from Africa to America. Their performance included vocals, dancing, "face offs" on Taye Go Kits, and rousing drumset conversations.

Sergio Bellotti turned his spot into a performance/educational clinic, as befits a professor at Berklee College. His drumming was muscular, while his snare/hat patterns were sensitive and contemporary.

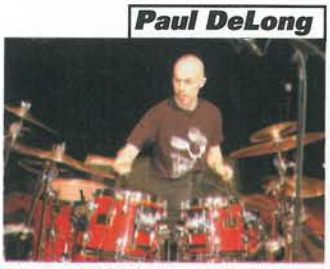
Justin Spencer began with a stunning vocal imitation of turntable scratching and ended with a barrage on rubber garbage cans, proving that there's art lurking everywhere.

Toronto legend **Paul DeLong** wowed the audience with his band The Code. Paul deftly negotiated the group's extraordinarily complex arrangements in what was, as they say in Quebec, a *tour de force*.

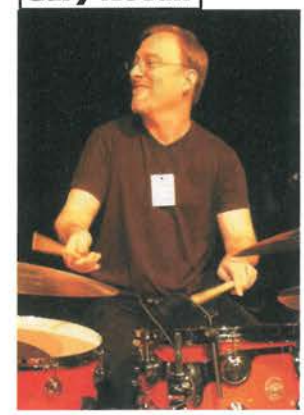
From behind the drumset, **Vera Figueiredo** took the audience from the Brazilian rainforest into the clubs and concert halls of the world. Jaws dropped at her unique presence, approach, and distinctive licks.

Puerto Rican all-stars **Paoli Mejias**, **Javier Oquendo**, and **Marcos Lopez Ayala** presented the liturgy of Latin percussion. The fifteen-year old Ayala alone offered a treatise on how to play timbales.

Billy Ward's words of wisdom (which he interrupted with, "I gotta speak slower; I'm from New York City") were not lost on the predominantly French-speaking audience. "Be yourself," advised Billy. "Play all the tones at your disposal, but don't play more than is necessary." When Billy laid sticks to drum, the message was loud and clear.

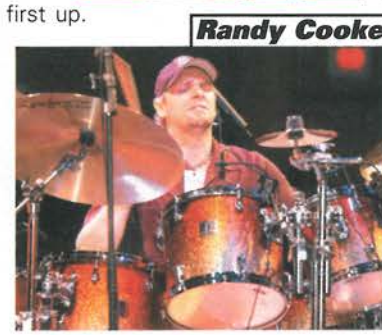


Tommy Aldridge received a plaque from the Fest organizers in recognition of his long and stellar career in rock. The Black Oak Arkansas/Ozzy/Whitesnake vet then sat down at the drums and gave 100%—and then some. (He played with sticks and bare hands until, quite literally, he bled.) Tommy's cymbal flourishes and double bass drums were especially frightening.



Sunday, November 9

The winners of the Yamaha Rising Star contest were first up. **Giulio Pampena**, **Marc-Andre Gilbert**, **Emmanuelle Caplette**, and **Samuel Joly** performed with a crack Quebec rhythm section, breezing through fusion and jazz tracks.



Pat Metheny's **Antonio Sanchez** counseled the audience to develop chops—but not to be disappointed when they use only 30% of them on the average gig. "However," he said with a winning smile, "today, I'm going to play 100%!" Antonio built up a spectacular solo, with phrases that increased incrementally in complexity.

Canadian session ace **Randy Cooke** tossed off some scary licks, then quickly admitted, "Those are things I *never* play." He explained that in the course of a day in the studio, his agenda is simple: Play creatively, but not to excess. He admirably demonstrated this concept while playing to backing tracks.

JoJo Mayer seemed to be on a mission to prove how long a drummer could groove before breaking. Working in a predominantly drum 'n' bass genre, he motored forth without a single hesitation, flawlessly executing intricate variations that pumped up the excitement in the room.

The charismatic **Mike Mangini** seemed octopus-like as he traversed his uniquely symmetrical tom configuration. How he reached the Earth Ride to his extreme left, or pulled off those lightning-fast fills, remains a mystery. His credo, though, was obvious: *Practice, practice, practice.*

Gary Novak closed the Fest with an airy acoustic jazz set, featuring bassist James Genus and pianist Deron Johnson. Performing on a retro tangerine glitter kit, Gary reminded us that there is music yet to be made on the basic, four-piece drumset. The crowd obviously agreed, as evidenced by their standing ovation.

During the afternoon, tribute plaques went to Yamaha drum design guru **Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara**, master timpanist **Louis Charbonneau**, and Canadian drum icon **Jerry Mercer** of April Wine. Ralph Angelillo also asked the audience to observe a moment of silence in honor of *Modern Drummer* founder **Ron Spagnardi**.

Sponsors for the Montreal Drum Fest included AKG, Aquarian, Baobab, Beyerdynamic, Drum Workshop, Evans, LP, Paiste, Pearl, Premier, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Rhythm Tech, Sabian, Shure, Sonor, Tama, Taye, Trueline, UFIP, Vater, Vic Firth, Yamaha, and Zildjian Cymbals and Drumsticks.

Story by T. Bruce Wittet

Photos by Heinz Kronberger, except where indicated

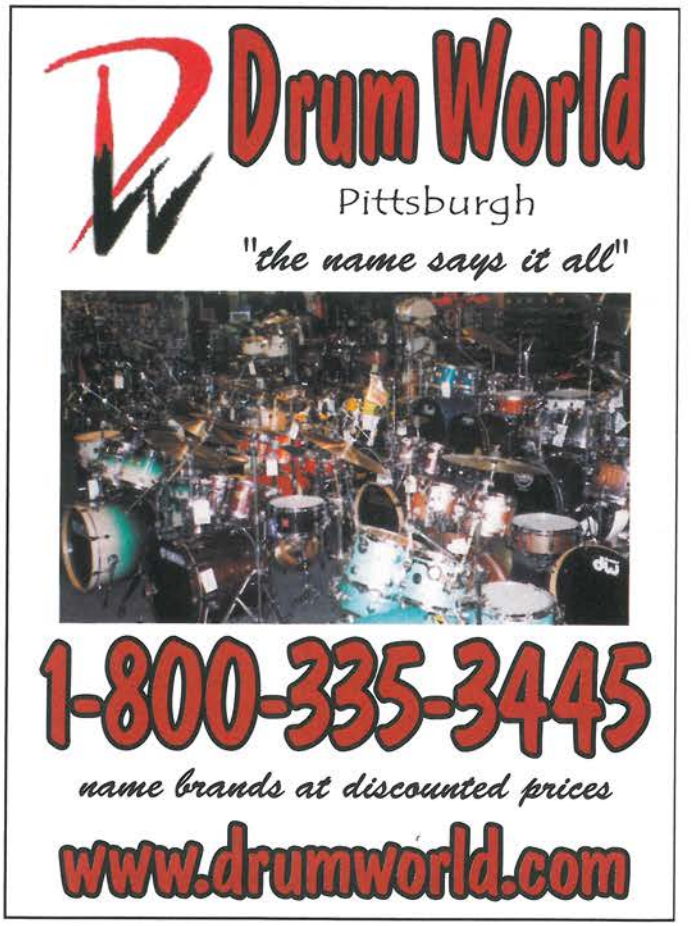
Sarah Hommel Drum All

Percussionist/composer **Sarah Hommel** was joined by percussionist **Mino Cinelu** (Miles Davis, Weather Report, Sting), drummers **Victor Jones** (Stan Getz, Freddie Hubbard, Michel Pettruciani), **Victor Lewis** (Dexter Gordon, Carla Bley, David Sanborn), and **Richard Zukor** (Dem Brooklyn Bums), and vibraphonist **Bill Ware** (Jazz Passengers, Club Bird All-Stars, solo artist) at CAMI Hall in New York this past October 5 to perform in *A Sarah Hommel Drum All*. The concert featured works written by Hommel for percussion instruments including drumset, timbales, timpani, vibraphone, marimba, xylophone, cajon, and African drums.

In addition to performing with her own jazz ensemble, Jazz Squad, Hommel is a member of the group Kinetic Drums. She has been awarded two National Endowment grants as a composer, and recently released a jazz CD called *That Would Be Telling*.

In "Dance One For Honi," a piece written for four drumsets, Hommel set up a rolling pattern that served as a background to improvisational solos by Lewis, Jones, Hommel, and Ware. Later in the concert the musicians set up their instruments within the audience for Hommel's composition "Little Luke Early." Bill Ware's vibe improvisations were posed against crashing statements from large drums and loud cymbals played by the other musicians. The location of the instruments and the arrangement of parts among the drummers made the music seem to surround the audience in a whirlwind of percussion sounds. Other highlights of the show included a virtuosic solo by Mino Cinelu in "Victor's Lesson," as well as Hommel's surprise vocals on the calypso-flavored "This Is What My Friends Tell Me." The concert was recorded for a CD that will be released later this year.

From left: Victor Jones, Bill Ware, Sarah Hommel, Mino Cinelu, Victor Lewis, and Rich Zukor



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Mike Marsh (Dashboard Confessional),
Steve Jocz (Sum 41),
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Shannon Larkin (Godsmack),
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William Goldsmith (The Fire Theft)

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Stanton Moore And Ron Spagnardi Honored By Dunnett And Drumsmith.com

Stanton Moore (Galactic, Garage A Trois) has been awarded the Eric A. Bergquist award for excellence in education in the percussive arts by Ronn Dunnett of Dunnett Classic Drums Ltd. and www.drumsmith.com. The award was presented to Stanton on October 8 following a clinic in Vancouver, Canada.

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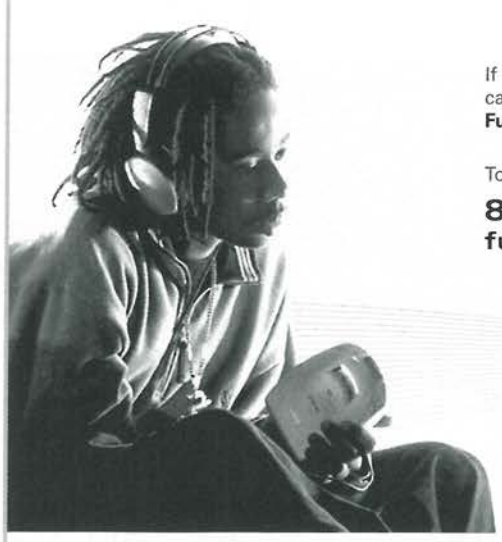

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Dunnett states, "This award recognizes contributions that professional drummers and teachers make above and beyond the call. Stanton has taken the clinic to a new level. His audiences are inspired by more than just an awesome display of musicianship. They take home a wealth of practical ideas, a better understanding of drumming from a historic perspective, and the sheer pleasure of spending time with an artist who is there for no other reason than to share his knowledge and love of drumming."

From left: James Johnson and Carlos Vallejo (of Tom Lee Music, Vancouver, Canada), Stanton Moore, and Ronn Dunnett

The Eric A. Bergquist award is named for a pioneering Canadian teacher (and Ronn Dunnett's friend and mentor). It came about after a group of drummers at online Internet forum www.drumsmith.com learned of the passing of *MD* editor **Ron Spagnardi**, and decided to make a contribution to the scholarship fund established in Ron's name. "I was moved by that," says Ronn Dunnett, "and I wanted to respond with something that would honor Eric *and* Ron."

As part of the Bergquist award to Stanton Moore, Dunnett Classic Drums will make a cash contribution to the *MD* scholarship fund in Stanton's name. Money raised through auctions and donations from drumsmith.com will also be included.

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Indy Quickies

Yamaha "Guru" Retires

After more than thirty years guiding the destiny and design of Yamaha drums, legendary drum guru **Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara** will retire on February 1, 2004 (his sixtieth birthday).

Raised in Tokyo, Hagi learned the virtues of handcrafting from his silversmith father and seamstress mother. In his mid-twenties he entered the Yamaha fold, where he progressed quickly from retail to management. Hagi eventually settled in the drum division, where his inquisitive and creative mind helped to facilitate most of the innovations we associate today with Yamaha. These include ball & socket tom mounts, the legendary piano-lacquered Recording Custom drum series, the Maple Custom series, and the recently introduced Nouveau "quick change" lug, to name but a few.

Hagi is also revered for his dedication, warmth, and humor by hundreds of Yamaha artists who've enjoyed a personal as well as professional connection with him over the years. In 2001 Hagi was presented with *Modern Drummer*'s Editor's Achievement Award in recognition of his long and distinguished career.

T. Bruce Wittet

A New KoSA

The new KoSA Academy has been established at 5457 St. Jacques West, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada as a year-round learning center for drumset players and percussionists. Programs of study include drumset (all styles), African, Brazilian, Cuban, Arabic, and hand drumming, and classical percussion. Students may choose to have private lessons, take group classes with rhythm sections, and be part of small ensembles, all of which are taught by some of the most respected players in the music community. The Academy will also hold masterclasses featuring world-renowned visiting artists.

In related news, the KoSA Cuba cultural exchange workshops and jazz festival will be held this coming April 25 to May 10 at the EL Senador resort in Cayo Coco. The annual KoSA International Percussion Workshop & Festival will be held July 26 to August 1 at Castleton State College, in Castleton, Vermont. For more information on these and other KoSA events, go to www.kosamusic.com.

Noto's Turns 25

MD congratulates **Michael Noto** on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his Baton Rouge, Louisiana music shop, Michael Noto's Music Store. Mike was included in *Modern Drummer*'s "Shop Owners: On Opening A Drum Shop" feature, way back in the June 1982 issue.

A Pro-Mark Incentive

Pro-Mark has announced their Pro-Points incentive program. Whenever a drummer buys a Pro-Mark product, he or she simply needs to cut the bar code off the package and save it. Each Pro-Mark product carries a point value that can be found by visiting our Web site, www.promarkdrumsticks.com, and clicking on the Pro-Points icon. Customers may redeem their points for wearable items such as hats, shirts, and jackets, as well as for accessory items like drumkeys and practice pads. They can even get their signature imprinted on twelve pairs of sticks.

Moonie Cymbal Winner

Jason Keller of McDonough, Georgia is the winner in the "Win Moonie's Cymbals!" contest that appeared in the September 2003 issue of *Modern Drummer*. Jason has won a set of Paiste 2002 cymbals that replicates the set that the late, great Keith Moon played. The set includes a pair of 15" 2002 heavy hi-hats, 16", 18", and 20" 2002 crashes, an 18" 2002 medium crash, and a 22" 2002 ride. Congratulations to Jason from *Modern Drummer* and Paiste.

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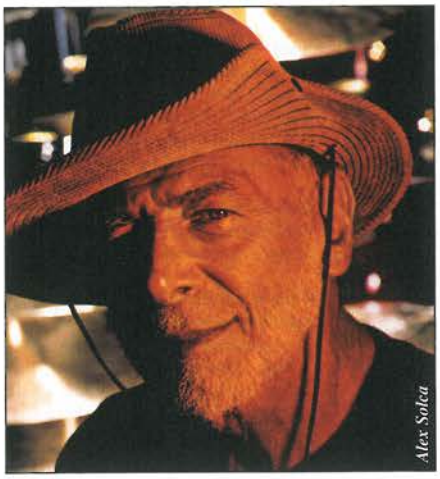
In Memoriam

Richard Wilson



Drummer/teacher/composer Richard Wilson passed away on October 18, 2003. He was seventy-four.

As a drummer, Richard performed with such artists as Duke Ellington, Sarah Vaughan, Chet Baker, Don Ellis, Gary Peacock, and Buddy DeFranco. He also led his own National Endowment Orchestra, so named because he was the only drummer in history to win three National Endowment grants for composition. As a teacher, Richard's approach transcended the typical "licks" and "chops" of drumming. His exercises were complex, deeply musical, and *really* hard to play. He encouraged his students to see the L.A. Philharmonic perform modern, atonal works, in the hopes of expanding the students' overall musicality.

Richard never went out of his way to advertise himself as a big-name teacher. When asked about this, his response was, "If you're hip, you'll find out about me eventually." Yet his life story—which went far beyond the drums—was so incredible that, unless you knew him personally, you wouldn't believe it. Wilson survived everything from plane crashes to cancer, and kept coming back for more. He was a brilliant and unique individual who will be missed by all of us who knew him.

David Ingraham
(Tribe Of Gypsies, Bruce Dickinson, Young Dubliners)

Editor's note: Richard Wilson was profiled in the Teachers' Forum *department of the April 1996* MD.

Richie LePore

Drummer/percussionist Richie LePore died this past June 20 following a long period of ill health. LePore was a first-call session percussionist in Los Angeles from the 1960s through the 1980s, contributing to many album projects and film scores. In addition, he was in demand for tours with such artists as Bette Midler, Frank Zappa, and Anne Murray, and with shows like *Sugar Babies* and *The Ice Capades*.

LePore was known for performing on non-traditional instruments with renowned composer Harry Partch, and on classical percussion with the L.A. Philharmonic. He was also a dedicated teacher who spent many years on the faculty of the Dick Grove School Of Music in Los Angeles, the Hartt School Of Music in Hartford, Connecticut, and other institutions.

In his later years Richie became wheelchair-bound, but continued to play and teach. He worked with the Lemelson Assistive Technology Development Center at Hampshire College, helping them to develop a special device for playing the bass drum without a leg.

A scholarship fund at the Hartt School Of Music has been established in Richie's name. Information can be obtained from Michael Augeri, 60 Pineridge Road, Torrington, Connecticut.

Michael Augeri

Who's Using What

New Evans drumhead endorsers include **Morgan Rose** (Sevendust, right), **The Reverend** (Avenged Sevenfold), **Jason Bittner** (Shadows Fall), **Francis Mark** (From Autumn To Ashes), **Scott Reeder** (Fu Manchu), **Tommy Decker** (Spineshank), and **Matt Byrne** (Hatebreed).

Adam King (Jason Mraz) is a new Meinl cymbal artist.

This year's MTV Headbanger's Ball tour features three prominent rock bands whose drummers endorse Pro-Mark sticks. The bands are Lamb Of God (**Chris Adler**), Killswitch Engage (**Adam Dutkiewicz**), and Shadows Fall (**Jason Bittner**). Pro-Mark will be providing hundreds of pairs of sticks imprinted with the bands' logos to be given away from the stage and during radio promotions. In addition, the bands will be autographing sticks that will be given away to a few lucky fans.

Neil Peart (Rush) is now a Sabian cymbal artist.

Quick Beats

Charley Drayton

(divinyls, Keith Richards & The Xpensive Winos, sessions)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
Just to name a half dozen, I like the various drummers on *The Best Of Don Drummond*, especially on the tune "Aliphang." Also, Vernell Fournier on "Poinciana" from *Live At The Pershing* (Ahmad Jamal), Candy Finch on "Swing Low Sweet Cadillac" (Dizzy Gillespie), any song Charly Charles played with Ian Dury & The Blockheads on *New Boots And Panties!!*, Clyde Stubblefield on "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothin'" from *Sex Machine Live From Augusta* (James Brown), and Art Blakey on "Alimode" (Jazz Messengers).

What are some of your favorite grooves that *you've* recorded?
I played drums and bass on "Human On The Inside" with divinyls, on "Rainbow" by a new artist, Josh Bennett, and on "I Let A Good Man Go" by Barbara Lynn.

What are your favorite TV show themes?
Courageous Cat, the station sign off [silence], and *Speed Racer*.

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?
Lately my superband has been Billie Holiday, Art Blakey, Lisa Coleman, and Freddy Stone, with me on pedal steel, baritone sax, and sometimes bass and drums. Jimi Hendrix can drop in any time he wants. Same policy applies for Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Grady Tate, and Billy Hart.

What song makes you say, "I wish I played on that one"?
I would have liked to play guitar on "Harmony" by Sly & The Family Stone, and drums on "The Wanderer" by Dion and "Dancing In The Street" by Martha & The Vandellas.

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CONTROL CONTEST

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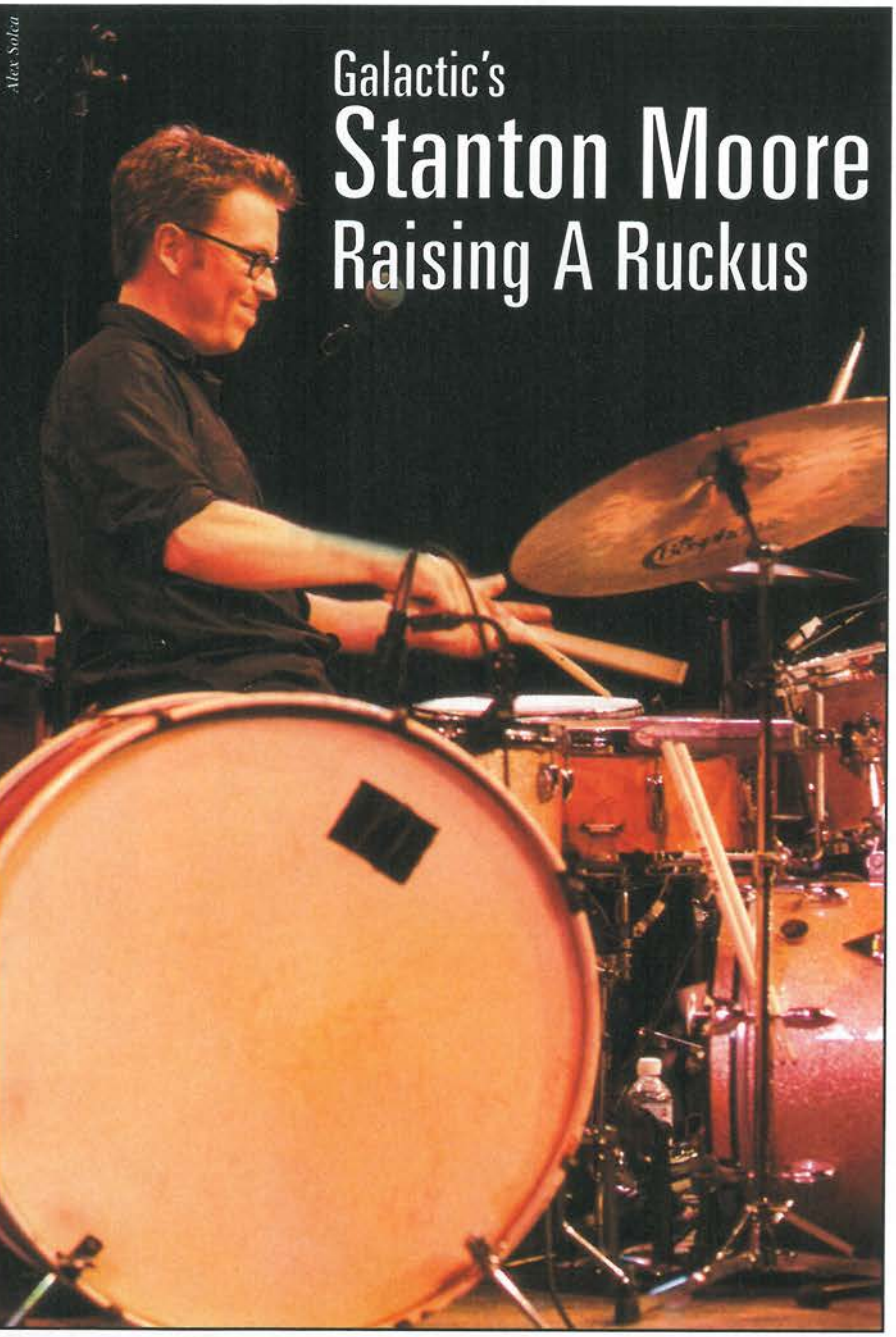
GRAND PRIZE: One (1) randomly drawn winner will receive Thomas' 7-piece **Sonor** Delite Series Drumset in Brilliant Champagne Sparkle, including Giant Step Pedals and 3000/5000 Series Hardware • A 16-piece **Meinl** Cymbalset, including Thomas' choice of Byzance, Classics and Generation-X models • A set of **Remo** Emperor™ drumheads • 12 pair of **Vic Firth** Thomas Lang signature sticks, as well as a set of Vic Firth SIH1 Stereo Isolation Headphones and an SBAG2 embroidered stick bag • One autographed copy of "Thomas Lang: Creative Control" DVD from **Hudson Music**. Approximate retail value $14,310.00.

RUNNER-UP PRIZES (One item per randomly drawn winner)**: Meinl** Classics Prepack • **Meinl** MCS Prepack • **Meinl** Cymbal Bag • **Remo** Thomas Lang Practice Pad Set • 35 autographed copies of "Thomas Lang: Creative Control" from **Hudson Music** • 12 pair of **Vic Firth** Thomas Lang signature sticks • **Vic Firth** American Classic® T-Shirt • **Vic Firth** VicGrip

CONSUMER DISCLOSURE: 1. Send a 3.5"x5.5" or 4"x6" postcard with your name, address, e-mail and telephone number to: MD/Thomas Lang Contest, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish, but each hand-written entry must be mailed separately. **3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 1/1/04 AND ENDS 3/31/04. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 3/31/04 AND RECEIVED BY 4/4/04**. 5. Winners will be selected by random drawing on April 12, 2004 and notified by phone on or about April 15, 2004. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Sonor, HSS, Meinl, Vic Firth, Remo, Hudson Music, and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada (except in Florida and the Province of Quebec), 12 years of age or older. California residents under 18 may not participate. Void where prohibited by law. 9. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 10. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 11. Approximate retail value of all prizes: $16,905.00.

COMING IN **APRIL**



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Rack 'Em Up!

Houston drummer Tim Qualls describes his setup as functional, adaptable, and esoteric. It's a 1991 Tama Artstar II kit with a custom blue-over-purple lacquer finish hand-painted by Tama. Tim had the tom rims powder-coated in black for added dramatic effect.

Other components of the kit include a 6x10 Pacific snare, a 7¼x14 Sonor Hilite snare, an 8" LP mini timbale, fourteen Sabian cymbals, an 8" Paiste bell, 15" Zildjian New Beat hi-hats, and LP Rancan and Wuhan China cymbals. The kit is mounted on a Gibraltar rack, with Yamaha, Tama, and Gibraltar cymbal boom arms. A Yamaha hi-hat and a Tama Iron Cobra double pedal round out the hardware. Remo coated Emperors are on the tops of the toms (and the 10" snare), with Ebony Ambassadors on the bottoms. The main snare has a PowerStroke 3 batter. The bass drum is fitted with an Evans EMAD batter and a Remo custom color-matched front head.

"The rack system makes it easy to add or drop gear as is dictated by the style of music or the venue," says Tim. "I use this kit for session work on everything from zydeco to country, fusion, and alternative."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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